FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE

A biography of
Michael Joseph Savage

Barry Gustafson

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Dedicated to Mrs Eileen Brown (née Savage), whose deep and continuing interest in her uncle and his career ensured the preservation of vital primary sources concerning Michael Joseph Savage's Australian childhood and also correspondence relating to the last fifteen years of his life in New Zealand.

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PREFACE

FOR MANY YEARS after his death in 1940, a photo of Michael Joseph Savage hung on the wall inside thousands of New Zealand homes. Undoubtedly the most loved of all New Zealand's Prime Ministers, Savage had become a legend in his lifetime, the personification of the social security system created by the first Labour Government in four hectic years between the Depression and the outbreak of the Second World War. He was remembered with affection as a folk hero from an age when Labour appeared to be a crusading party with clear-cut ideals and a sense of purpose. Yet since his death, the reality of what Michael Joseph Savage was has been lost in legends perpetuated by admirers and detractors. He has become a shadowy, one-dimensional figure.

During the past forty-five years Savage has been evaluated variously as a saint who changed the face of New Zealand society; as an incompetent, vindictive hypocrite who received undue credit for the creation of the Labour Party and the record of the first Labour Government; and as a good, simple man of limited ability but genuine idealism and unlimited public appeal, behind whose benign image more formidable, practical politicians such as Walter Nash and Peter Fraser formulated and carried out Labour's policy. All three versions agree that the policy and achievements of the first Labour Government elected in 1935, and indeed the party's philosophical positions and organisational structures that had grown up in the twenty-five years prior to that election, became personified in Savage. But the latter two accounts suggest that he undeservedly received the gratitude and credit for the effort of a team in which, although he was the captain, he was far from being the most able member.

In fact, Savage was a strong, humane politician, not only a great communicator who could project a cause comprehensible to all as common sense and common justice, but also with more intellectual capacity and influence on policy than has been generally accepted in recent years. A loner, somewhat aloof but with a kindliness and a fundamental consistency of personal values and attitudes born of years of suffering in his childhood and youth, Savage dominated the political scene during the latter part

of his life as no other New Zealand Prime Minister, except perhaps Richard John Seddon, has ever done.

This biography set out to record, explain and evaluate Savage's life, not to honour it. Of course, I was well aware of the dangers of hagiography. In a cynical world praise often goes to the revisionist historian and to the biographer who cuts the subject down to size, perhaps exposing unrecorded weaknesses, sex scandals or bizarre, traumatic experiences. Despite my diligent search, I found no such skeletons in Savage's closet—no hidden heterosexual or homosexual relationships, for example. Indeed, the negative aspects of his character, personality and political ability are so outweighed by the strengths that some critics will no doubt accuse me of having written the hagiography I set out to avoid.

My defence is that, in my opinion, a person is essentially what he or she does, and when and where and why. Thus my biography of Savage is basically a historical narrative with little attempt at psychobiography or psychohistory, although I am well aware of the literature in this area. The reader will discern some elements of psychology, sociology, political science, economics and philosophy as well as history in this biography, but they are incidental. I have told Savage's life story as I saw it happening. No biographer can ever be completely sure that he or she has captured the whole truth; probably no-one can. But in this study of Savage, whom I clearly see as a good man, nothing is fabricated and nothing is omitted that might have altered the picture. I have simply told a story and presented, insofar as I am able, Savage's public and private life; his relationships and achievements; his joys and his sorrows; the process of socialisation, particularly in the critical early years, that formulated his character, personality, identity and goals; his stock of ideas and where they came from; and, most tentatively of all, his inner motivation and self-image. The events often speak for themselves with no need for me to embellish them with superfluous interpretation.

Although I have focused on one person and have not attempted to write a detailed history of the Labour Party or the 'life and times' of Australia and New Zealand from 1872–1940, I have been unable to ignore completely the environment in which Savage lived and operated. There was clearly an inextricable interrelationship between Savage and the world around him. For that reason I make no apology for discussing the social, economic, political and intellectual context that helped make Savage what he was and to which he responded. I also make no claim that my biography of Savage is definitive, that it is intended to be the last word on either Savage or his times. Other historians are free to take the information and initial analysis that I have made available and reinterpret it as they will.

One question that I have felt compelled to at least attempt to answer concerns Savage's leadership ability and style. Here I owe a debt to James McGregor Burns, whose *Leadership* (Harper and Row, New York, 1978) I found very provocative and enlightening. Readers of the biography will

find that I see Savage as a politician moral in the widest sense in that he could creatively arouse people and uplift their legitimate but basically self-centred individual aspirations into a transcending moral crusade for righteous collective action.

Survivors often rewrite history from their own perspective and to suit their personal vested interests. It was certainly in Fraser's and Nash's interests in the decades after Savage's death in 1940 to promote and perpetuate the impression that, as Nash told the author, 'Savage was the front man, Fraser the intellect, and Nash the worker' in the 1935–40 Labour Cabinet. Thus one version of history became established.

Equally, John A. Lee sought for over forty years, by pen, tongue and repetition, to interpret history in such a way that his contribution was maximised and justified and Savage's reputation totally destroyed. As he told me in 1981, 'Twenty years of *I Fight for New Zealand* have done a job. I've arrived at the stage when the swing is almost completely my way. . . . the anti-Lee stance has become a spitting against the wind.'

Although Lee agreed to be interviewed on a number of occasions and had published a great deal of material, including his edited diaries, he declined me access to the originals and to his correspondence records on the grounds that 'I have no desire to allow anyone to pick through my material' and 'as in Sinclair's case attempt to confute his benefactors'.

Despite Lee's reticence and despite the fact that many of Savage's contemporaries were now dead and that there was no large single archive of Savage papers, personal or public, such as Nash left, a great deal of information about Savage was discovered, as the bibliography reveals.

My greatest debt is to Mrs Eileen Brown (née Savage), the eldest daughter of Savage's brother Rowland. Mrs Brown, to whom this book is dedicated, kept recollections of her father's family, and correspondence over a twenty-year period with her uncle. She also collected other material, which she used for her unpublished 'Tribute to Michael Joseph Savage'. On two occasions Mrs Brown and her sisters, Mrs May O'Donoghue and Mrs Doris Cofield, both of whom had extended holidays with their uncle in New Zealand during the 1920s and 1930s, provided a great deal of personal information about Savage. Mrs Brown and I also maintained a regular correspondence for several years, during which she clarified or added to earlier information. All Mrs Brown's papers, copyright of which she formally deeded to me, will be placed in a library with the other material gathered during the research for this book.

During three visits to Australia while researching the first thirty-five years of Savage's life, I incurred many other debts. Professor P.J. O'Farrell of the University of New South Wales not only discussed the project with me but made available all his research notes for his biography of Harry Holland. These notes, which have subsequently been deposited in the Australian National Library in Canberra, included summaries and copies of Labour Party Head Office papers that have been destroyed since

Professor O'Farrell read them. At Benalla I received considerable assistance from Mrs Judith Bassett, the research officer of the Benalla and District Historial Society, who not only provided access to the society's records but generously helped seek out further information beyond her own impressive knowledge of local history. At Rutherglen Mr Barry Deas willingly discussed the history of that area with me. At Wagga Wagga and Narrandera I became indebted to Don Brech, the archivist at the Riverina College of Advanced Education, and Dr David Denholm of its history department, who were both professionally very helpful and personally very hospitable. Mr Gerry Kendall, managing editor of the *Narrandera Argus*, made available the only extant and very fragile back copies of the *Narrandera Argus* and *Narandera* [*sic*] *Ensign*.

Among the many other Australian archivists and librarians who must be mentioned are those at the La Trobe State Library of Victoria, the University of Melbourne Archives, the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the Victorian State Archives at Lavington, the National Library of Australia, the Australian National University Library and Archives at Canberra, and the Mitchell State Library of New South Wales at Sydney.

Among the many people in New Zealand I interviewed or corresponded with, all of whom are acknowledged with gratitude in the bibliography, I must mention specifically Mrs Aruba Alfrey (née French) for her recollections of Savage over the last thirty-three years of his life. Mr John Wybrow, the general secretary of the New Zealand Labour Party, gave me unrestricted access to Head Office records, and I was also able to examine completely the extant minutes, correspondence and records of the Auckland Labour Representation Committee. Dr Michael Hoare, at that time archivist at the Alexander Turnbull Library, went out of his way to be helpful. I also received considerable assistance from many other librarians and archivists at the Turnbull and General Assembly Libraries, the National Archives, Radio New Zealand's Sound Archives, the Hocken Library, the libraries of the Universities of Auckland, Wellington and Canterbury, the Auckland Public Library, and the Auckland Institute and Museum Library. The Auckland City Council and the Auckland Hospital Board also made freely available their minutes and records. The University of Auckland photographers did an excellent job in restoring and reproducing illustrations. The University of Auckland Research and Leave Committees were generous in helping to fund three research visits to Australia and extended research elsewhere in New Zealand. The authors of biographies of Savage's major contemporaries—Patrick O'Farrell (Holland), Erik Olssen (Lee) and Keith Sinclair (Nash)—will find their works reflected in my biography of Savage. Michael King, who is currently writing a biography of Fraser, also drew my attention to several matters and provided me with material he had obtained from Sir Alistair McIntosh. Professor Robert Chapman and Sir Keith Sinclair, the latter also making available the interviews he taped while researching

his biography of Nash, and Graham Bush, who spent part of his own leave in Australia checking out information, continually provided encouragement, as did Bert Roth and my wife, Margaret. Mrs Marjorie Gould typed the entire manuscript. Geoff Walker of Reed Methuen showed considerable patience as deadlines were extended throughout the five years it took to research and write. Jane Connor's editorial expertise is reflected throughout the book.

I
THE 'TUPENNY CHILD'
1872–86

THE WEEKS LEADING up to the birth of Michael Joseph Savage on 23 March 1872, the Saturday before Easter, were fearfully hot. Day after day the temperature on the small farm at Tatong, twenty kilometres east of the town of Benalla in north-eastern Victoria, rose to 140 degrees in the sun, 110 in the shade, and even up to 112 in the open air during the night. Bush-fires were common, the dust was choking, many people were ill with sunstroke or summer sicknesses. Johanna Savage, struggling to care for her six other surviving children, all under the age of twelve, had an exhausting pregnancy. The suffocating heat oozed into every nook and cranny of the tiny bark-roofed, slab-walled cottage, draining the expectant mother of strength and health, which she never really recovered after a neighbour, Eliza Chivers, delivered Johanna's eighth and youngest child, the baby of the family or, as the Irish say, the 'tupenny child'.[1]

By any measure, Michael Savage's early life was seared by poverty, hardship, grief and loneliness. Insecurity was not just a word, an abstract intellectual concept, but a real experience. His personality and mind were developed not in an urban industrial slum but in the rural poverty of the Australian bush. The key to Savage's personality, self-sufficiency, singleness of purpose, compassion, and to his later political attitudes, goals and motivation, is found in the first thirty-five years of his life spent in north-eastern Victoria and the Riverina district of New South Wales. He was to be hardened from infancy by a harsh physical environment, repeated emotional suffering, constant economic deprivation, enforced loneliness, and the continual frustration of his hopes for a better life. All this started with his birth for, as he recalled in later years, 'I was born not on the best dairying land in the country but on the worst. If there is any worse farm than the one on which I was born I would like to have a look at it.'[2]

Michael did have two advantages: his mother and his father. Johanna Savage was thirty-four years of age when Michael was born; her husband, Richard Savage, was forty-one. Richard, whose own parents had worked on a small farm at Waterask near the village of Dundrum in County Down, was a descendant of the Savages of the Ards, a family of Norman knights who with William the Conqueror had invaded England in 1066. They had helped subjugate Ireland in 1177 but lost their castle and estates at Portaferry, County Down, and went into exile in Europe in 1691 rather than renounce their Catholic religion and loyalty to King James II. In 1729 the family returned to Ireland and leased a large house in Moneycarrah, Downpatrick, and it was in that house, still today occupied by Savage descendants, that in 1830 Richard was born.[3]

The second of seven children, Richard and two of his brothers emigrated from Ireland following the great famine of the 1840s during which, in six horrendous years, two million Irish died or migrated abroad. The eldest brother, Rowland, went to Shelbyville, Tennessee, in the United States. He later served throughout the American Civil War as a Confederate officer commanding a company of the 1st Tennessee Regiment, being wounded twice at the battles of Shiloh and Chickamauga.[4] His younger brothers, Richard and Hugh, chose instead to migrate to Victoria, where the Irish-born population increased from 9000 to 100 000 between 1846 and 1871.[5] Recorded on the passenger list as a farmer, Richard sailed from Liverpool on the *Champion of the Seas* late in 1856, arriving in Melbourne on 4 March 1857.

Famine provided the major reason for leaving Ireland; gold was the attraction for many Irish migrants choosing Victoria as their destination. By 1861 a third of the world's gold was coming from the colony. Richard, however, did not rush off in search of instant riches after his arrival in Melbourne but obtained work rowing a two-oared passenger ferry on the Yarra River and also collecting tolls on the Sydney road. He shared with his employer, Patrick Hanna, another Irish migrant from County Down, an interest in current affairs, economics and politics, and was later to help Hanna in his successful campaign in 1866 for membership of the Victorian Legislative Assembly. For a time Savage also appears to have considered a political career.

In Melbourne Richard met Johanna Hayes, a slightly built, attractive, determined, and very capable young woman from a farming family in Limerick. She had arrived in Melbourne on the *Atlanta* on 9 June 1858 to join her cousins, the Linehans and Kenneallys, who were already settled there. On 4 August 1859 Richard and Johanna were married at the St Francis Catholic Church, Melbourne. Richard was twenty-nine, Johanna, who had been born in 1838, was twenty-one.

Melbourne in the 1850s was the largest city in Australia. Its population grew five-fold during the decade as it became the dominant commercial and financial centre for the continent. But it also was a crowded, dirty

metropolis. Housing was difficult to find and thousands of people lived in tents and shacks. The *Sydney Morning Herald*, describing the rival city of Melbourne at that time, claimed that 'a worse regulated, worse governed, worse drained, worse lighted, worse watered town of note is not on the face of the globe; and that a population more thoroughly disposed, in every grade, to cheating and robbery, open and covert, does not exist.'[6] The poor of Melbourne subsisted in appalling conditions. Along the northern bank of the Yarra River, where Richard Savage rowed endlessly back and forth, sprang up an industrial belt of slaughterhouses, fellmongeries, tanneries, tallow factories, breweries and flourmills, whose combined, stinking effluent, together with the garbage and excreta of the shanty town, discharged through the soggy, unsewered soil into the river, which also served as the reservoir for the city's water supply. Enteric diseases were, understandably, common.

Any possibility of Richard and Johanna Savage staying in Melbourne ended with the death from diphtheria of their first child, Mary Ann, aged six months. Johanna herself was unwell and towards the end of the fifties an economic slump had made Melbourne even more depressing than before. Richard and Johanna shared a dream with many other migrants. They wanted land they could farm, not only to give themselves and their children a higher standard of living and a healthier environment, but also to give themselves economic independence and security, the prerequisites for psychological and social independence and security. They had no desire to tear down the more fortunate in society to their own inadequate level but rather a burning wish to raise themselves by carving out of the wilderness a homestead of their own.

In 1862, only a year after the government of Victoria started unlocking the large leasehold runs of the squatters and subdividing them for selection, Richard and his brother Hugh selected allotments in the parish of Tatong, east of Benalla and about 200 kilometres north-east of Melbourne. Richard selected an allotment of seventy-two acres and Hugh an adjoining 118, with Holland's Creek forming their back boundary and providing a welcome source of water.[7] Although most selectors purchased on terms, Richard bought his allotment outright. This gave him the freehold but may also have deprived him of sufficient working capital to develop the farm and tide him over the difficult years ahead. Although Hugh went to Tatong with his brother, Hugh's fiancée refused to migrate from Ireland to join him. Hugh surrendered his selection and returned permanently to his homeland.

Until the railway reached Benalla in 1873, the only way to travel there from Melbourne was by road. With their effects and tools piled onto a lumbering bullock wagon and nursing their second child, a daughter, Rose, born in 1861, the Savages laboriously worked their way north along the rough, dirt road and through the seemingly endless, empty countryside. Johanna was eight months pregnant. At last they came to the tiny

settlement of Benalla on the Broken River. To the east lay wooded plains and hilly bush country, beyond which, in a great arc, rose alpine mountains. This was their new home.

By the end of September 1862 the Savages were living on their selection at Tatong. During the following ten years six more children were born at regular intervals. All were sons: Richard junior, who arrived at the end of October 1862, Hugh, William, Rowland, Joseph and Michael. All survived infancy, despite the fact that approximately half the babies born to selectors' wives during those years died.[8] All the children except the two youngest, Joe and Mick, were named after their father and his brothers and sisters. Mick was named in honour of his mother's favourite cousin, Michael Kenneally.

Pioneer selectors such as Michael Savage's mother and father faced many problems. One was the hostility of the squatters, who bitterly resented seeing newcomers laying claim to land the squatters regarded as theirs by prior occupancy and who believed, with some justification, that the land was unsuitable anyway for crop cultivation on small farms.

The area around Benalla is today known as 'Kelly country', and some historians have suggested that Ned Kelly's 'social banditry' was the most dramatic manifestation of a class struggle between the squatters and the selectors.[9] But only a relatively small, interrelated group of people resorted to lawlessness. Most, like the Savages, struggled honestly to overcome their hardship, poverty and disillusion without engaging in theft or violence. Ned Kelly and Michael Savage were the products of similar environments, the sons of poor Irish-Catholic settlers who scratched out a living in the frontier-land around Benalla. Both saw one parent struggle to maintain a large, young family after the death of the other parent. Both suffered from poverty, insecurity, a deep sense of injustice. Both sorrowed at the death of a beloved older sister in childbirth. Both rebelled against the system that suppressed them. But there the similarity ended. Kelly drifted into crime, expressed his frustration in futile violence and, his body sieved by bullets, died on a Melbourne gallows on 11 November 1880. Years later Michael Savage observed, 'Though I was born in the same district in which Ned Kelly did his bushranging, I did not inherit his methods.'[10]

The selectors had to face a far more hostile foe than the squatters, however. Nature was anything but kind to Richard and Johanna Savage and their young family. The land was more suited to grazing than crops, but most selections, usually less than 200 acres, were too small for either. The farm at Tatong was too far from markets and in winter the dirt road to Benalla was often impassable, even twenty horses finding it impossible to pull wagons through the axle-deep mud. Little money was available for improvements. The rainfall was erratic. Disaster followed disaster. A fire destroyed Richard Savage's second wheat crop, already ruined by red dust parasite, and most of his fencing in 1864. His third crop in 1865

was flattened by a violent storm. The drought that scorched out the 1869 crop was followed in June 1870 by one of the largest floods in the district's history. A few months later a tremendous hurricane swept the countryside, wreaking havoc and perpetuating the flood. In October, five months after the land first vanished under water, there came 'more rain; more floods; more damage; more destruction; more narrow escapes; more disappointment.'[11] Needless to say, there was no crop in 1870. Hordes of rabbits and kangaroos and plagues of grasshoppers competed with each other in trying to strip the countryside of such vegetation as remained. In the early 1870s a general slump in wheat prices further depressed the embattled selectors.

Richard Savage's life was an unremitting battle with nature. Short of capital, tools and luck, he slaved through the arid heat of summer, with temperatures often well in excess of 100 degrees, and the cold, wet winter, when temperatures dropped below freezing point. A six-day working week from 4 a.m. until 9 to 10 p.m. was not uncommon for the Savages and other 'cockies', as the farmers were called after the cockatoos who also pecked a subsistence diet of grain from the unyielding ground.

At first most of the land was heavily wooded and had to be cleared by ringbarking, felling and burning. Sometimes logs were carted away by bullocks to be sold for firewood in Melbourne or Sydney. Stumps had to be moved before the single-furrow plough could cut through rubbish, roots and virgin ground and the first crop could be sown by hand. When absence of natural disasters allowed a crop to mature, it was harvested with a hand scythe and threshed by a hand flail.

Richard Savage fenced his property and built a hut. It had rough slab walls, bark roof, mud floor, and adjacent fireplace for cooking and heating. A little furniture had been brought from Melbourne but most items were constructed on the spot, for example beds made from poles and flour bags.

Always short of capital to pay for stores or improvements to his property, Richard earned a few shillings doing odd jobs such as fencing, dam-sinking, drain-digging, clearing and shearing for the squatters and graziers.

Despite his own busy life, he found time to help others even less fortunate than himself. In 1873, for example, a neighbour, Dan Ginnivan, aged thirty-three, was thrown from his horse and killed.[12] He left a widow and three young children, whom Richard and Johanna befriended. One of the children later married Rowland Savage.

Nearly always pregnant or nursing a new baby, Johanna's life also seemed to hold little more than toil. She fed and clothed her large and growing family as best she could from the meagre resources available. Without running water, garments had to be washed in the creek and a water-barrel near the house filled daily. Johanna made many items used about the house—butter, soap, candles, yeast, fat for the lamps made out of old tins. She topped up the woodpile and shifted bags of grain in the

heat and dust of summer and the ankle-deep mud of winter. She fed the fowls and animals, collected the eggs and milked the cows. She tended the vegetable garden and, when Richard was away contract fencing, Johanna had the additional burden of the heavy manual work of the farm, for at first the children were all too young to help with that.

The nearest school and church were at Benalla. Johanna started to teach the children to read and write and also taught them the Catholic religion. She nursed them when they were ill. In 1871, while she was sick during her pregnancy with Michael, there was a tragic accident. The then youngest child, Joe, about one year old, was dropped accidentally by a young girl who was helping Johanna. Joe's spine was fractured and he was left crippled and hunchbacked for life, needing for many years special maternal care.

Under such conditions and pressures, youth, beauty and health faded early, ravaged by repeated child-bearing, long hours, hard toil, poor food and harsh climate. Her son Rowland remembered:

> Mother was not a big strong woman, but she was very game and full of ambition with great hopes of making a decent home some day. . . . There were, of course, happy moments amidst the never-ending toil. Mother's weekly luxury-purchase in Benalla was a small bag of boiled lollies for her young family, with a new Jew's harp occasionally, total cost one shilling.
>
> Back home after supper (we didn't call it tea then) out came the new Jew's harp which she played very well—Irish jigs and reels for the delighted little Rose, Richard junior, Hugh, Willie and myself. And later on for Joe and Mick.
>
> Mother taught us to stepdance soon as we could walk, the Irish Jig and so on, at which she was no mean performer. How well I remember the joy she brought into our young hearts. I often think our Mother must have been made of good steel and possessed of a great heart, or to put a racy phrase to it, she was a wonderful stayer and never seemed to tire.[13]

Despite the occasional sweets and jigs, the children of selectors shared the harshness of their parents' lives. The Savage children were more fortunate than some. The newspapers frequently reported cases of infanticide, of children lost in the bush, drowned in creeks, bitten by snakes, burnt to death, kicked or thrown by horses, smitten by sandy-grit blindness, sunstroke, diphtheria, typhoid, cholera, pneumonia, rheumatic or scarlet fever. But as with other bush children, the seven little Savages worked on the farm from the earliest age possible. They collected and chopped wood. They carted four-gallon tins of water from the creek to fill up the house barrel or water the vegetable garden. They dug drains, helped with fencing, gleaned rubbish from the fields recently cleared of bush, broke up clods of earth, dug and weeded the garden, and assisted with the sowing and reaping. They collected eggs, hand-milked cows morning and evening, and fed the animals. They helped mind the

younger children. They kept the fire burning, putting dung on it at night to keep the mosquitos at bay.

The diet of the Savage family was the standard one for selectors: porridge, damper, corn-meal, bread, dripping, vegetables from the garden, salads made from dandelions and milk thistles, sometimes eggs, sometimes meat—kangaroo, rabbit and possum as well as mutton—and black tea. A common meal for breakfast was pollard, the waste material from winnowed grain, which on more affluent farms was fed to the animals. Rowland Savage remembered that, when his mother was ill in 1876 and prices were at rock bottom, the family existed for a while on 'braised kangaroo meat, kangaroo tail soup, bush honey and home-grown vegetables'.[14] The children had no shoes and a minimum of clothes, handed down from older members of the family. As the youngest, Mick was dressed in clothes outgrown by his five older brothers.

The pioneer selectors may have been seeking independence and security but they often ate less regularly and well than the itinerant bush workers who 'humped the swag' and sought employment on the large stations. Many young, single selectors' sons left their fathers' farms and turned their backs on the heart-breaking drudgery of farming. They became shearers, stockmen, horse-breakers, labourers on the sheep stations of Victoria and across the Murray in the Riverina. Many of their fathers, particularly those who had been goldminers with little if any farming experience, also walked off their selections. It has been estimated that possibly only one tough, proud, independent, stubborn selector in ten who originally took up allotments persevered and established himself on the land.[15] Richard Savage lasted forty years.

One serious problem Savage shared with other selectors was lack of working capital. Most selectors were forced to borrow, but at first banks were expressly forbidden by law to lend to settlers. As a result many settlers during the 1870s and 1880s found themselves paying extortionate interest rates of twenty to twenty-five per cent to merchants, graziers and loan-sharks, whose ulterior motive for lending was often to foreclose on the property after it had been cleared and improved.

Another major problem was that the original selections were too small and ill suited for wheat growing, which mechanisation was soon to transform anyway into capital-intensive, large-scale farming. On 17 May 1872, a few months after Michael's birth, his father began to purchase on terms from the government 176 acres of newly opened land at Rothesay, a few kilometres south-west of Tatong. Savage's first farm, which he now sold, was better land and was to become even more desirable with the development of the dairy industry in the 1890s. But it was prone to flooding, and 1872 was the third successive year that it had been under water for two or three months. It was also surrounded on all sides by the freehold blocks of the big graziers Splatt, McCullough and Colclough. There was nowhere for Savage to expand, and by 1872 he was convinced

that his salvation lay in a larger mixed farm and crop rotation.

The move to Rothesay, under the shadow of Mount Samaria, at 1035 metres the highest spot in Benalla Shire, was primarily to take advantage of adjoining crown land, and for a time Savage was the only selector on the new block. He intended that each of his seven children, upon attaining the age of eighteen, would select 320 acres adjacent to their father's farm. Rose, Richard, Hugh, William and Joe later obtained allotments, but only Rose's 392 acres were subsequently paid off and combined with her father's property. Unlike the first farm, which he had bought outright, Richard Savage purchased the Rothesay selection on terms, possibly to give himself more working capital this time. The selection consisted of three allotments of seventy-two, sixty-six and fourteen acres, plus an area set aside for a proposed extension to the railway line, which reached Benalla from Melbourne in 1873. The property was on a secondary road, which became known as Savage's Lane and which linked Tatong to the main Benalla-Samaria road. Although Richard Savage completed his purchase of the seventy-two-acre section in 1884, he could not meet the requirements for purchasing his other two sections, which were reopened and acquired by other selectors.

From 1872 until 1875 the Savage family developed the new selection while living on another farm a short distance away. The selection was heavily wooded and difficult to clear. Johanna was also for a time too ill to move to the new 640-square-foot house that Richard built for his family of nine. It had slab sides, a bark roof, an earth floor, and canvas and paper interior walls. By 1878 he had also built a 216-square-foot storehouse and 153 chains of fencing, mainly of logs and saplings; dug a sixteen-foot-deep well; planted a vegetable garden; cleared, ploughed and sown twelve acres of wheat and oats; cleared another three acres; and ring-barked fifty-seven acres of timber. The seventy-two-acre selection cost him £72 and he estimated the total cost of his improvements at £144.[16]

In 1877, however, Richard Savage had a more serious concern than the development of his Rothesay selection. Johanna's health had been deteriorating markedly since Michael's birth in 1872. For months in 1874 she had been too ill to move from her bed after suffering an attack of rheumatic fever. In 1876 she collapsed again. Dr Joseph Henry from Benalla diagnosed heart trouble and ordered at least another three months' complete rest. The two oldest children, Rose aged fifteen and Richard a year younger, left school to help at home and on the farm and to care for their sick mother and the five younger children. In the words of Rowland,

> This was a great drawback to Father and the seven young children, to say nothing of Mother's suffering of mind and body. Rose, the eldest, knew little of the management of a farm home. However, we just had to manage the best way we could. Into the bargain Rose mothered young

> Mick a little toddler battling around with small crippled Joe. They were great cobbers. Always hand in hand.
>
> I mind well hearing Mother say then as always: 'We are not half thankful enough to God for all He does for us'. I was only six, but for the life of me I couldn't see what Mother had to be thankful about.
>
> I now realise her deep appreciation of Father's good qualities. He didn't smoke, drink or gamble, and was an estimable husband, father and citizen. He had forfeited his rightful place in the political world in Melbourne solely on account of her state of health. Mother also mentioned that she was being spared the crucifixion of seeing her children torn from her as weeping exiles. Always she said: 'God is good. Ours is holy poverty. Not degrading poverty. Thanks be to God.'
>
> She worried greatly over our futures, especially for young Joe sitting hunched beside her sickbed, with his hand cuddled in hers. Likewise young Mick was never out of her mind: 'What'll become of my Tupenny Child, at all, at all?' In all her sufferings Mother never neglected to line us all up for our night prayers at her bedside. There on his knees on the earthen floor Mick learned to make the Sign of the Cross.[17]

Johanna's prayers appeared to have been answered. She recovered and resumed a normal life. But a little over a year later disaster struck. Early in 1878 Johanna became ill again with appendicitis. At that time appendicitis was largely inoperable because, before Lister's discoveries, the opening of the stomach meant almost certain death. Johanna was ill for four weeks, lying in bed in the heat of mid-summer, surrounded by her family. She was thirty-nine years old. Her children were aged sixteen, fifteen, thirteen, eleven, nine, seven and five. Again, Rowland recalls what was to be his mother's last illness:

> Doctor Henry was in constant attendance, and everything possible was done under the circumstances, but Mother developed excruciating pain. I shall never forget it—the agony of peritonitis. No hospital, and little was known of general anaesthesia and major surgery. Her screams! In her few easy moments, with no thought of herself, saying always 'God is good' she tried to console and advise Father as to what he should do for himself and the seven children after she had gone. One of her own countrymen, Reverend Father Kennedy of Benalla, administered the last sacraments.
>
> Before the dawning on 10 February 1878 the soul of our dear mother, a very fine, game little woman passed from this earth, with our broken-hearted father, Rose, Richard, Hugh and Mrs McNaughton kneeling around her deathbed, praying. Mick and I, sleeping together in our little shirts, were not told until morning, along with Willie and Joe. Mick was not quite six years old then.[18]

1878, which started with the death of Johanna, continued to be a dismal year for the Savage family. Good harvests early in the year were negated by very low grain prices. Then heavy rains and flooding in October and November led to the 1879 harvest being the lowest yield on record. The newspapers noted that 'from Benalla to the Murray nothing but sheer ruin stares many in the face'.[19] The death of his wife, the drop in grain

prices, and the loss of the 1879 harvest were all severe blows to Richard Savage as he struggled to get his new farm established. It was little wonder that he failed to make the required improvements on part of his Rothesay selection and forfeited about half of it. Nevertheless, in March 1880 Rose paid £24 to take out a licence on a selection of 392 acres next to her father's farm. Over the following years the Savage family cleared, fenced and cultivated this property, which was eventually combined with Richard Savage's farm and worked more and more as a dairy farm. Rose continued to live with and care for her father and six younger brothers. To Joe and Mick especially, their attractive, lively, teenage sister became a substitute mother, although Michael never forgot Johanna, who in later years he was to claim was the inspiration for his political activities.[20]

In 1879, at the age of seven, Michael Savage started school. Before Victoria introduced the first comprehensive system of free, compulsory and secular education in 1872, the education of Australian children had been chaotic. Those who did not attend church schools, whose parents could not teach them at home, or who could not afford private tuition often remained illiterate. Richard Savage was an educated man who acted as election poll clerk for the Rothesay district and also wrote letters for neighbours unable to read or write. He placed a very high value on education for his children. Within months of the passing of the 1872 act, he organised a petition and sent off several letters requesting the government to establish a school at Rothesay.[21] He pointed out that there were six families with twenty-two children, including the seven young Savages, under the age of fourteen in the district. He arranged for a temporary school building opposite the farm on which the Savage family was itself in temporary residence. Inquiries from the Education Department in Melbourne as to the possibility of accommodation for a female teacher received a reply from the chairman of the local Education Board of Advice that 'Mr and Mrs Savage Rothesay near Benalla – most respected farmers' were prepared 'to receive a female teacher and give her the necessary accommodation' in order to get the school started.[22] In August 1874 the Rothesay school, officially designated State School Number 1438, was opened. The initial twenty pupils, sitting in four seven-foot-long desks, were crowded into a room twelve feet by eleven feet and with a height of seven feet. According to one of the first teachers, in summer 'the heat [was] at times quite oppressive and fatiguing'.[23]

In 1879 a new school building, still so small that Michael later recalled 'one could hardly turn round in it', was erected.[24] His father organised a dance to mark the opening. This started at 6.30 p.m., with the dancing and singing to violin and concertina going on until daybreak, when a children's picnic was held.[25]

More important than the new schoolroom was a new teacher, whom Michael years later said had been 'his greatest friend outside of his parents'.[26] Forty-seven years later he was to pay a special visit to

Rothesay to see her, and fifty-six years later, on becoming Prime Minister of New Zealand, he sent her an autographed portrait. Sarah Ann Brown was typical of the young women teachers who staffed the pioneer bush schools and brought literacy to rural Victoria. A little woman, a few inches over five feet, and only just twenty, she was later to convert to Catholicism on her marriage, bring up her own large family and run a farm after the death of her husband, and subsequently raise her grandchildren from infancy when her daughter-in-law died.[27] For several years, while teaching Michael at Rothesay, Sarah Ann lived in the lean-to at the back of the school, becoming friendly with the Savage family, especially Rose. As a teacher she had a fine sense of humour and was remembered by those who knew her as firm but very kindly, a woman with a direct manner who did not tolerate nonsense or humbug. She was very particular about the use of correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, and it was no doubt largely as the result of her teaching that Michael Savage developed a firm, clear, attractive style of handwriting, and that in the letters he wrote throughout his lifetime it is almost impossible to find an error.

By 1879 the Savage family had moved from opposite the school and had resided for several years on their own Rothesay selection, two and a half kilometres away. Michael and his brothers daily picked their barefooted way along a track through the thick scrub with the help of pieces of paper pinned to the trees to stop them straying and becoming bushed. On the way to and from school they often played bushrangers, for 1878–80 were the years of the Kelly gang's greatest notoriety in the district. Sarah Ann Brown remembered the young Mick as a 'quiet, little blue-eyed boy [who] had the brains and used them [and] was anxious and willing to do anything'.[28] She also recalled Mick coming to school with flour and dough on his fingers and clothes after having made his own lunch of damper or scones.[29]

Richard Savage continued to be the parental mainstay of the school, writing letters to the authorities and organising petitions throughout the 1880s in an eventually unsuccessful effort to keep the school open or prevent it being changed to a half-time teaching post. In 1882, for example, when Michael was a fourth-year pupil and his crippled brother, Joe, two years older, had just started school, Richard Savage wrote that the average attendance of sixteen or seventeen pupils over the preceding winter months was misleading because of the 'flooded state of the roads', which had stopped children walking to school. The decline in attendance at the end of the previous summer had been because 'a great many of the children could not attend through blindness caused by the unusually dry summer'.[30]

When he was not at school, and for a short time after he obtained by examination his certificate of competence and left school in 1884, Mick helped Rose about the house and his father about the farm. But life could

be very lonely for young children like Mick. Even by the early 1880s settlement at Rothesay was sparse. The children of other families lived some distance away and older brothers and sisters were usually too busy to spend much time with the younger children. By 1884 most of Michael's brothers were young men, engrossed in their work, their adult friendships, and playing Australian rules football. Young Mick, therefore, spent much of his spare time keeping crippled Joe company. Joe was unable to walk long distances and had to sit and rest frequently, particularly during the abnormally hot summer of 1884 when the grass was parched and the searing air was worsened by the smoke from continual bush fires. When the storms finally came and extinguished the fires and destroyed the grasshopper hordes, they also blew down trees and hedges and were accompanied by infestations of kangaroos, crows and cockatoos, which left little grain for the farmers to gather. In March of the following year, early frosts, night after night, blackened, withered and finally destroyed the district's potato crops.

During the winter months, when roads were often impassable, travel was restricted and people shut indoors, rural families like the Savages were dependent on each other and on their immediate neighbours for help, conversation and social activity. In summer there was more widespread contact with visits to Benalla and picnics and sports meetings such as the annual gathering at nearby Samaria. One of Richard Savage's neighbours was a widower with a young family. Joe Whelan was an experienced hunter and tracker who taught all the Savage boys to recognise and break-in good horses, to shoot and to hunt in the bush. Mick developed a life-long love of horses, became an excellent shot and often went kangaroo and rabbit hunting.

Whelan, who was illiterate, was a frequent visitor to the Savage farm, especially on a Sunday afternoon when Richard Savage used to read the newspapers aloud to him. The two youngest Savages, Joe and Mick, also sat and listened to the exploits of the Kelly gang; to pathetic stories of destitute old men and women, the sick and unemployed; to lurid cases of assault, rape, child abuse, murder, and domestic violence and tragedy; to barely understood articles on land selection, protection or free trade, the rise of unions, home rule for Ireland, international and domestic politics and economics. The papers mirrored and indeed highlighted the harshness of the wider world into which Michael Savage was soon to be thrust.

II
'A MAN OF SORROWS AND ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF' 1886–93

THE SUMMER OF 1885–86 was one of unprecedented drought in the Benalla district. 'Wherever the eye ranges', lamented the *Ensign*, 'it is met by a dry burnt up prospect . . . with the soil baked and parched to the consistency and hardness of a brick'.[1] Ploughs stood idle and rusting in the fields, the cows stopped producing milk and many selectors faced insolvency. Little wonder that the selectors' youngest sons were encouraged to leave home and seek employment elsewhere. Older boys joined the itinerant labour force of shearers and station-hands. Younger lads, especially if they were reasonably bright and hard-working, sought employment in a shop or office. In 1886, at the age of fourteen, Michael Savage secured his first job. It was in a Benalla general store, and Michael was to work for its owner, Antonio Ball, for the following seven years.

Although today Benalla is an attractive town, in the 1880s it was a rough, crude, filthy, frontier settlement. The town was divided in two by the Broken River, described by one contemporary observer as 'a sluggish and almost torpid stream . . . broken up into numbers of lagoons' whose 'waters are muddy, and seem disposed to stagnate'.[2] The roads and footpaths were unsealed and undrained. In summer they were very dusty; in winter, after a few heavy showers, people trying to cross the road sank up to their knees in putrid mud. The corner of Bridge and Carrier Streets, where Ball's shop was located in a large two-storeyed building, had originally been swampy land and flooded badly. In front of the unimposing shops and pubs, most of which were single storey, were open drains, hitching posts and water troughs. There was no street lighting. The population of the town was about 1700—one quarter of those living in the Benalla Shire—of whom fifty-five per cent were male, twenty-seven

per cent Roman Catholic and twenty per cent born in Ireland.[3] Benalla had a railway station, a post and telegraph office, a police court, a Rechabite Hall, a Mechanics' Institute and Library with 150 books, two newspapers, two state schools, two private schools, four banks and five churches.[4] It also had a brewery, several wine and spirits shops and seventeen hotels.

One of the wine and spirits merchant licences was held by Mick's new employer, who combined that part of his business with a large general store selling clothing, shoes, millinery, drapery, hardware, furniture, crockery and groceries. Early in 1886 Ball had advertised a complete clearance sale because his landlord, who was shortly to become insolvent, had advertised the premises for sale. In June, however, Ball received a reprieve and bought in new stock, limiting himself to drapery, wines and spirits, and just a few grocery items necessary to meet the requirements of his liquor licence. He also hired a new assistant, Michael Savage.

Tony Ball undoubtedly influenced the young Michael. An accomplished actor and singer and widely read, Ball was very involved in community affairs as founder of the Benalla fire brigade, organiser of children's picnics and member of the rifle club, all activities in which Michael Savage was also later to be involved.

At first Mick was paid 5*s*. a week and keep. He swept and dusted the store, cleaned the windows, unpacked cartons, disposed of rubbish, stocked shelves, served at the counter, delivered groceries, parcels, and bottles of wine and spirits, mucked out the stable, and groomed and fed the carthorse. He slept on a stretcher in the back of the shop and had meals at the 'Five Alls' pub, named after a painting depicting five different characters: the Queen, who rules over all; a clergyman, who prays for all; a lawyer, who pleads for all; a soldier who fights for all; and a poor, depressed farmer, who pays for all.[5] The 'Five Alls', which was patronised by Kelly sympathisers, was owned and managed by George and Maria Marcham, the latter renowned throughout the district for nursing victims of accidents on the Sydney-Melbourne road and caring for orphans and young children, like Mick, whose families were not resident in Benalla.

Shop hours in Benalla during the 1880s, especially in a shop selling wine and spirits, were determined by customer demand. It was usual for shops to be open twelve to fifteen hours each weekday and up to sixteen hours, from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m., on Saturdays, when many settlers and station-hands came to town. Not until 1896 did an extension to the Shops and Factories Act of 1885 stipulate that women and children under the age of sixteen were not to work more than fifty-two hours a week.[6] In 1886 young Mick was usually working in excess of ninety hours a week.

A month or so after Michael Savage started work in Ball's store, a meeting of clergymen, shopkeepers and others interested in starting a weekly half-holiday was held in Benalla. The meeting was in response to an *Ensign* editorial deploring the strain being placed upon young men

and women working in Benalla's shops.[7] The clergymen were also concerned that young male shop assistants, who had little free time during the week, were spending Sunday, their one free day, shooting, fishing and generally relaxing, thus desecrating the Sabbath. An early closing of shops on Wednesday would provide an alternative time for sport and leave Sunday, it was hoped, for church attendance. Ball was never mentioned among the shopkeepers who supported the campaign, which had no effect on closing hours over the next five years.

In December 1887 Ball selected 820 acres of land at Tatong and the following January sold his drapery shop to A. C. Watsford, of Melbourne.[8] He kept his wine and spirits merchant's licence, however, and a fortnight later opened a liquor shop in half of the old St George's Hall adjoining the corner drapery shop. Into this much smaller building he moved his Dubois Brandy (23*s.* per gallon), Old Jamaica Rum (19*s.* per gallon), English Ale and Stout (1*s.* per bottle), Irish and Scotch Whisky (5*s.* per quart), Gin (4*s.* per bottle), and local wine (1*s.* per bottle).[9] Michael Savage, now almost sixteen years of age, went with Ball and, because Ball was resident for lengthy periods on his selection, the young assistant began to take more responsibility. In nineteenth-century Victoria, boys became men early.

Michael Savage, or Mick as he was generally known, was no teenage larrikin drifting from job to job and engaging in loutish behaviour. Had he done so he would not have lasted seven years in his first job. Nor would he have sought to improve his formal education. Mick could read, write and use basic arithmetic, and Ball now started to introduce him to various commercial skills. In February 1889 Thomas McCristal, a well-qualified and experienced teacher, arrived in Benalla and started his Christian but 'strictly unsectarian' Benalla College, later known as the North Eastern College.[10] Although the school was designed primarily to prepare day pupils for university, McCristal from the first offered classes every Wednesday evening in bookkeeping, writing and arithmetic, and every Monday and Friday evenings preparatory classes for matriculation. Michael Savage was far from satisfied with his primary school certificate, which stated that he was 'sufficiently educated'.[11] At the age of almost seventeen, four years after completing his primary schooling, Mick started again to improve his formal education at the college's night classes. McCristal's influence on Mick probably went beyond teaching him bookkeeping. The motto chosen for the school by McCristal was 'Esse quam videri', which, loosely translated, means 'don't be a hypocrite'. McCristal continually stressed the importance of persevering to overcome difficulties, of never assuming one's education had finished, of continuing to read worthwhile books, and of religious tolerance.

The Mechanics' Institute, which was supposed to help educate workers and might have been expected to have had an influence on Mick, had ironically become elitist in Benalla. Its membership was made up largely

of doctors, lawyers, bankers and businessmen. A young farm or shop boy like Mick would have felt out of place. There is no evidence that he ever took part in any of its activities, though he may have borrowed books from the library, with which Ball was associated, and attended some of the open meetings of the Mechanics' Literary and Debating Society, which was established in 1889 and held debates on such topics as Chinese immigration and citizenship.

Nor is there any evidence that Michael Savage belonged to or was influenced directly by the Australian Natives' Association, a branch of which was formed in Benalla in 1882 and reformed in 1890. However, he may well have been a member in Benalla, and both in Benalla and later at Rutherglen he had close friends who certainly did belong to and hold office in the ANA.[12] The ANA's meetings were also open to the public and during 1890 and 1891, when Michael was eighteen and nineteen, a major effort was made to recruit members for the ANA in Benalla. Membership of the ANA, originally established in Melbourne in 1871, was restricted to Australian-born males sixteen years of age and over. It was a friendly society providing benefits to its members in sickness, disaster or death 'as a matter of right . . . not cap in hand or begging'.[13] This was a concept, and indeed a turn of phrase, often used by Savage in his later life when advocating social security in New Zealand. The ANA was influenced in its co-operative approach to social welfare by the writings of the American Edward Bellamy, whom Savage was to admire and quote throughout his life. The ANA was more than just a friendly society. It was a mutual improvement society in which young men could learn 'that there is something better to live for than loitering about street corners'[14] and could develop self-reliance and habits of clear thought and speech rather than 'the gift of the gab'. It was a social circle for discussing topics of the day; and from the first was very nationalistic and reform-minded, advocating pride in being Australian; the assimilation of new immigrants; the federation of Australia into one nation; one person, one vote; women's suffrage; a legal minimum wage; irrigation; afforestation; conservation of natural resources; maternal and infant welfare; and national defence. It was 'non-sectarian in the strictest sense' and membership was open to Jew, Catholic and Protestant.

The Savage family was part of a Catholic minority in a predominantly Protestant Australia. But until about 1890, although Melbourne did have some sectarian strife, there was considerable religious tolerance and harmony in Australia and, particularly in rural areas, feuds tended to be class-related or inter-personal rather than religious. Priests and ministers were few and far between, and the relative absence of church buildings also meant the absence of sectarian social centres around which religious antagonisms might develop. Most Catholic and Protestant selectors, faced by a constant struggle for survival against death, drought and isolation, preferred to live in co-operation rather than conflict with their neighbours.

In the 1890s, however, sectarian bitterness increased, with Catholic priests prohibiting inter-marriage and being attacked in turn by dogmatic Protestants, especially the Orange Lodge, which had a large following in Benalla. Despite pleas for religious harmony from the pro-Catholic *Ensign* and the local Anglican minister, the Catholics came under attack from, among others, the ministers of the Benalla Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist Churches, and by 1890 Michael was well aware that his Catholic religious background could be a social disadvantage, even though he was not, by that time, as devout a Catholic as were his brothers Richard and William.

At the age of eighteen Michael was more interested in sport and recreation than religion. A friend who had grown up and gone to school with Michael, and whose sister later married Rowland, recalled the teenage Mick as 'a wiry, spirited lad, always ready to help the other fellow. He was good natured, outstandingly knowledgeable, very determined, kindly and popular with his school mates at Rothesay over whom he had a marked influence. . . . At Tony Ball's in Benalla his quiet humour appealed to the young coves of the town. . . . He was as handy with his hands in a scuffle as he was with odd jobs around Ball's store.'[15] All the Savage boys, with the exception of crippled Joe, were fine athletes, often being mentioned in the local newspapers as participants in Australian rules football teams and as the winners of races and field events at various sports gatherings, including large meetings attended by athletes from throughout the north-east and from as far away as Melbourne. Mick was a short man, built like his father rather than some of his brothers, who were well over six feet tall. He possessed considerable physical strength and later in the Rutherglen mines was to impress his friend Paddy Webb as one of the strongest men Webb ever met. Mick loved shooting on the vacant land adjacent to Mrs Marcham's 'Five Alls'. He swam nude on Sundays in the swimming hole near the railway bridge and fished in the Broken River, where blackfish, golden and silver perch, and cod up to twenty-five kilograms were caught. He played some football, although he was not as regular a player as his older brothers because most games were played on Saturdays when he was working. He exercised in a local gym and won various trophies for boxing and weightlifting, not only in Benalla but in other parts of Australia later in his life. He was a competent boxer, who on entering the ring teased opponents by joking that, 'if during the fight they keep from crying I'll see to it that they won't do much laughing'.[16] He was so strong that on one occasion in a crowded Rechabite Hall the young Mick Savage fought two successive bouts against different opponents, Harry Duffield and Gordie Willis.[17] He enjoyed the New Year's Day race meetings and started a habit of attending them which was to last for the rest of his life, though he rarely placed a bet. A very accomplished dancer, Mick gave exhibitions of stepdancing and Irish jigs, sometimes on top of a barrel, at sports meetings, concerts and social

functions in Benalla.[18]

Little is known of Michael's girlfriends during his teenage years, or even if there were any. Young men outnumbered young women in Benalla in the 1880s and some men returned to England or Ireland in search of brides. Many others had neither the inclination nor the means to settle down. A home was regarded as a prison by many itinerant, impecunious, casual labourers. A wage of £1 or £2 a week was barely sufficient to cover one's own needs, let alone those of a wife and children, and Michael was only earning 25*s.* by the time he was twenty. It was considered irresponsible to marry and start a family without the means of supporting it, and the local newspapers frequently reported the death of some young man leaving a wife and three or four children totally unprovided for. As the economy moved deeper into depression at the end of the 1880s, the number of marriages dropped sharply to even lower levels. Over a third of Australians in the late nineteenth century never married.[19]

The one girl with whom local legend associated the young Mick during his years in Benalla was the beautiful and somewhat mysterious Kate Kelly, the younger sister of Ned Kelly. Kate remained in the north-east near Benalla after the execution of her brother. At one time she and her mother, whom Savage recalled, shortly before his death, often having served in the store, contemplated opening a boarding house in Bridge Street, the same street as Ball's shop.[20] Kate supposedly met Michael in the store where he worked in the 1890s. He was nineteen or twenty. She was ten years older, about the same age as Rose Savage and Sarah Ann Brown and, like them, an excellent horse-rider. Kate later left the district, so the story goes, to live with Michael Savage in New Zealand. There was obviously no truth in the legend. In fact, both moved independently to sheep stations in New South Wales, where Kate, who had married a William Foster in 1888, had a family and was drowned in Lake Forbes in 1898.

In 1890 Michael experienced his first election campaign. Tony Ball, strongly supported by *Ensign* editorials, contested the Benalla Shire elections. He claimed to be a reformer and accused the incumbent councillors, most of whom were wealthy land-owners, of having formed a ring 'to plunder the Central Riding', which included the town of Benalla, by using shire funds to build bridges and improve roads near their farms.[21] He and the *Ensign* wanted those funds used in the town itself to improve the unsanitary drainage, provide a good water supply, erect street lamps and build a decent crossing of the river. Drainage was a particularly hotly debated issue during the lively campaign. The whole town had open drains into which people deposited sewage. The local shire engineer, only a few weeks before the election, had described the drain near the Carriers' Arms Hotel as 'a cesspit . . . emitting a most abominable stench, and that constantly'.[22] The editor of the *Ensign* argued, 'Mr Ball is not a man who takes up every new or popular objective merely to gain

a little personal notoriety. He is essentially a working man in any deserving cause, and has never been backward in promoting such practical undertakings as he thought would benefit the town'.[23] 'A most energetic worker . . . he has never been a talking man'.[24] In a poll restricted to ratepayers, Ball was sixth out of six candidates for three positions, obtaining only 79 votes to the third successful candidate's 296. The *Ensign* predictably lamented Ball's defeat and even the *Standard*, which had supported the successful candidates and said that Ball 'was all along generally regarded as having no show', admitted that he 'possesses considerable capacity and would no doubt have made an excellent councillor'.[25]

On 29 April 1891 the two-storeyed building on the corner next to Ball's wine-shop and formerly occupied by Ball's general store caught fire. The fire brigade saved it from being completely gutted.[26] A few weeks later Michael Savage's application to join the brigade was accepted.[27] He rapidly became very active as a fireman and in the brigade's gymnasium club, formed in November of that year.[28] The Benalla fire brigade at that time had a strength of twenty-five men and practised three nights a week, with the training including jumps from a height of six metres into canvas escape sheets. Firemen received 2*s.* an hour for the first hour at a fire and 1*s.* 6*d.* for each hour thereafter and for the official monthly practice.

The Benalla brigade took part in fire brigade contests throughout Victoria and, because of his considerable strength and speed, Mick was soon a member of several of the Benalla teams. At the 1891 Boxing Day sports at Beechworth, for example, he was in the four-man engine team and the four-man reel team. In March 1892 he was in four of the five Benalla teams that contested the annual fire brigades' demonstration at Ballarat. Only the brigade's captain, lieutenant and one other experienced fireman were included in as many teams as the young and relatively inexperienced recruit.

In July 1892 Michael Savage, only twenty years old and with less than a year's service in the brigade, was elected its secretary in a contested ballot.[29] In that position, for which he was paid a foreman's wage of an extra 6*d.* an hour above the normal rate for firemen, he organised the Benalla novelty sports in September, incidentally winning the firemen's race.[30] He also arranged the purchase of a new fire-engine, which arrived in Benalla in January 1893, and continued to take part in contests throughout Victoria and New South Wales, usually in a prize-winning team.[31]

By that time, Michael Savage's community activities were not confined to the fire brigade. In October 1892 he attended a meeting of local bodies and friendly societies called to organise the annual hospital Sunday demonstration and appeal.[32] Savage, who represented the brigade, was elected to the ten-person committee as treasurer, an indication that he was recognised by others in the community as both trustworthy and able to keep accounts. The charity function attracted over 1000 people and

raised a net profit of £27 for the Wangaratta Hospital and the Beechworth Benevolent Asylum.

Savage was horrified by the problems faced by hospitals and asylums in a society in which there was no government-funded social welfare. He was to have a lifetime concern not only for the physically ill but also for the care of the mentally ill and the elderly. Many of those incarcerated in the Beechworth Asylum at that time were not lunatics. They were old people with no-one to look after them and nowhere else to go; sometimes people with heart conditions, deformed, bedridden, suffering from strokes, afflicted by senility, addicted to alcohol. In the 1880s and 1890s Benalla removed from its streets undesirables and down-and-outs by charging them with lunacy and getting the local court to commit them to the Beechworth Asylum. There they were woken at 6.30 a.m., went to bed at 6 p.m., had coffee and one slice of bread and treacle for breakfast, soup, meat and potatoes for lunch, and a cup of tea and bread with honey for supper. They were obliged to bath once every three weeks.[33] To a young man of twenty, the sight of these old people locked away in the asylum must have been a depressing experience.

Michael himself, however, was a healthy young man and, at the start of the 1890s, fate appeared at last to be smiling on the Savage family. Rose, young Richard, William, Hugh and Joe all applied successfully for selections of land near their father's farm.[34] At the beginning of 1890, Rose married Edward Cain and, with her husband, started farming at Kilfeera Swamp near Benalla. Young Richard won the contracts to deliver mail to and from Benalla and Tatong via Rothesay and to and from Tatong and Lima East via Moorngag, Samaria and Swanpool for a total of £83 per annum.[35] Rowland, who had been unsuccessful in obtaining a selection, took his earnings of 8–10*s*. a day as a rabbiter and with a partner bought the large and well-established Cobb and Co. livery stables at the back of the prestigious Benalla Hotel. There he serviced coaches travelling along the Sydney-Melbourne road, hired out horses and buggies, broke in wild horses on contract, and offered stallions for stud.[36] Subsequently, Rowland sold out to his partner, and bought a hotel and established a small brewery at Yackandandah, further north.[37]

Michael's father, Richard Savage senior, following the discovery of refrigeration and ammonia-chilled railway vans, became one of the district's earliest and most ardent advocates of the establishment of a butter factory. He foresaw, correctly, that dairying would transform farming in the Rothesay-Swanpool-Tatong area east of Benalla. In 1891 he prepared a paper on the proposal and read it to a large meeting,[38] but his advice that the district should unite to set up one butter factory with a number of contributing creameries was ignored and various, competing, small factories were established at Tatong, Swanpool and Benalla. Somewhat reluctantly, Richard Savage, now over sixty years of age, supported the decision of his neighbours to 'go it alone' and build the Swanpool factory,

which became by the end of 1891 the first butter factory to commence operation in the Benalla district. Richard Savage was proposed as the first auditor.[39]

Disunity in the district was not confined to the farmers. By 1893 the fire brigade was split and weakened by dissension and wrangling at meetings. Four firemen were suspended for intoxication and insubordination. The captain resigned; the lieutenant, suffering from influenza, died from a fatal dose of morphia inadvertently prescribed by a local doctor. Their successors were bunglers, whose incompetence was judged to be responsible for the total destruction of one of the finest homes in Benalla in May 1893, a disaster that led to an inquiry by the Country Fire Board and the complete re-organisation of the brigade.[40] Michael Savage was not there to be part of the humiliation, having resigned as secretary and left Benalla some weeks before the fire.

Michael Savage turned his back on Benalla after losing his job and those nearest and dearest to him. The period 1891–93 was a watershed in Australian history. The 1880s had been, especially in Melbourne, a boom decade marked by frenzied speculation in land, building construction, mining and shares. The prosperity had been fuelled by overseas loans, heavy government expenditure on railways and other public works, freely available bank and finance company credit, and the arrival of 70 000 new immigrants in Victoria alone in the last half of the decade. Much of the financial activity added nothing productive to the economy and a considerable amount of it was accompanied by business fraud and political corruption. The Victorian Parliament became 'a sort of land speculators' club, where the most blatant "log-rolling"—the use of political power for private gain—became commonplace'.[41]

Inevitably, the boom economy and the whole financial structure of Australia collapsed. By 1892, forty-one land and finance companies in Melbourne and Sydney, with liabilities of £25,000,000, had failed.[42] In January 1893 the Federal Bank defaulted and in April, as the panic spread, twelve other banks closed. At the end of April 1893, the National Bank suspended business. It was the bank principally used by the business people of Benalla and also by many farmers.[43] Large numbers of selectors flocked to town only to find that the Victorian Government had closed the colony's entire banking system for a week to allow reconstruction.

The farmers were particularly concerned at the sudden and almost total contraction of loan money in 1892 and 1893. Farm income had fallen markedly since 1891, when a very wet winter and infestations of wombats and locusts had greatly reduced production. In 1892 rust had destroyed most of the wheat crop round Benalla and feed for stock had rarely been as scarce. Banks called up loans and foreclosed on mortgaged property. The government started pressing selectors for arrears in rent. Many younger, more recent selectors, faced with shortage of finance, were unable to meet the improvement clauses or repayments on their leases and forfeited

their selections. Older, more established farmers tried to carry on, but recovery from the depression was very slow and set back further in the countryside by seven years of drought from 1896–1902, the worst recorded drought in Australian history. By the end of it, wheat areas had been obliterated and stock numbers halved. Most of the Samaria district fell into the hands of one man, William McKellar, who had the Lima and Samaria homestead blocks, including most of the water, and who eventually bought up all the selections on either side of the Broken River. Richard Savage, after almost forty years of struggle, sold his farm and went to live with his son Rowland in 1898, a year in which bush-fires raged throughout the Benalla district, burning out many long-established settlers.

Not only farmers but also shopkeepers were made insolvent by the economic disaster. Antonio Ball's financial position may well have been adversely affected by the worsening financial situation and final suspension of the National Bank in Benalla in April 1893. For some weeks money was almost unobtainable as current accounts and fixed deposits were tied up and business advances ceased. Certainly, Ball appears to have lost his farm and to have been hard-pressed to remain solvent. He moved his home to a poorer part of town. He did not close for the annual picnic and did not support the weekly half-holiday. He started taking court cases on very flimsy grounds against hotels for relatively small amounts of money allegedly owing to him. He dispensed with the services of Mick Savage. Finally, a few years later, he sold his home and shop and left the district.[44]

The loss of his job was a bitter experience for Michael, who only a few days before had celebrated his twenty-first birthday. He realised the near impossibility of securing alternative employment locally. The bank crash and the concurrent depression resulted in a very large number of people being thrown out of work. By 1893, it has been estimated, 28.3 per cent of Victorian bread-winners were out of work.[45] At Yea, a town south of Benalla, three-quarters of the town's labourers and contractors were unemployed.[46] Those who did have work found their wages cut drastically between 1890 and 1894 by twenty to thirty-five per cent, according to official statistics, and unofficially by up to sixty per cent.[47]

Unemployment, however, was only one reason for Michael Savage leaving Benalla. The family bonds that bound him to the district had been cut by two tragedies in 1891. Death was a constant companion to many families in nineteenth-century Victoria. They watched helplessly as other members of the family died, not sedated and nursed by doctors and nurses in hospital but in slow agony at home. Thousands of Victorians died each year from tuberculosis, typhoid, diarrhoea, diphtheria or infant convulsions.[48] Many mothers died from complications while giving birth at home. Others died from puerperal fever and septicaemia, which plagued the appallingly unhygienic maternity wards of city hospitals.

On 9 January 1891 Rose, Michael's only sister, who had raised him from the time he was five years old, died in childbirth. She was thirty-one and had been married eleven months. Although Dr John Nicholson, a graduate of Edinburgh and Melbourne Universities, was in attendance, there was apparently little he could do. The baby's exit from the womb was blocked by the placenta, which ruptured. Rose bled to death in screaming agony. The baby was stillborn. 'Quite a gloom was cast over the town' by Rose's death and her funeral 'was one of the largest ever attended in the district', according to the *Standard*.[49] Rowland remembered that Rose's death was a terrible blow to Michael and that the youngest member of the family, not quite nineteen years of age, became 'overnight . . . untouchable and unfathomable'.[50] Each brother was given a watch albert made from Rose's hair.

The year ended as tragically as it had started. Rose had been one of the two people closest to Michael. The other was his crippled brother, Joe, who despite his disability had gone farming and become 'well-known and respected throughout the district, and was regarded as a young man of promise'.[51] During their childhood years, Michael had been very much his 'brother's keeper'. On Sunday 27 December 1891, two days after Christmas, Joe died at his father's home. He had been ill with pneumonia for four days and, according to the *Ensign*, the doctor 'had no hope of his patient's recovery from the first'.[52] Joe was twenty-one years of age when he died. From that time on Michael Savage used the name Michael Joseph Savage, eventually becoming known to his friends in New Zealand not by his Australian name of Mick Savage but as Joe Savage. He also, as a consequence of his sister's and brother's suffering and deaths, carried with him throughout the rest of his life a distinct lack of deference towards members of the medical profession.

The grim reaper had not yet finished with the Savage family. In February 1893 a bushfire at Swanpool threatened every farm in the district. Three thousand acres of grass were burnt out together with two homes, miles of fencing, and barns, yards and outhouses. Hugh Savage was among those who fought the fire. His horse fell into a waterhole and Hugh was very lucky to escape with only a leg injury.[53] But death was not to be so easily cheated.

In April 1894 Hugh, Rowland and William decided to have a triple wedding service in St Joseph's Church and to share a wedding breakfast at a local hotel before honeymooning in Melbourne. Unfortunately, Hugh's fiancée became ill with typhoid on the eve of the wedding, which continued without them.[54] Hugh rented a cottage in Benalla and there helped nurse his fiancée through her illness. The treatment for typhoid recommended at that time by the Board of Health in Melbourne consisted of liberal doses of wine, brandy, iced water, quinine and diluted sulphuric acid, following which the patient was immersed in cold water for fifteen minutes every three hours and wrapped in hot bran and blankets for the

rest of the time.[55] After ten days of nursing his fiancée, Hugh rode out to his farm at Rothesay. There he also fell ill with the typhoid. After battling the disease for a fortnight, Hugh Savage died on 27 May 1894. He was twenty-nine years old.

By that time Michael had been gone from Benalla for thirteen months. In mid-April 1893, three weeks after he turned twenty-one, Mick had packed his few possessions into a swag, 'humped the bluey', and set out in search of work. Rowland, who farewelled him, asked Mick what he was going to do. His young brother's reply was, 'Anything from pitch and toss to manslaughter'.[56]

Mick could have headed south to Melbourne, where two out of every five Victorians lived. But there were no jobs there. One writer has suggested that possibly every second man in Melbourne was unemployed at that time.[57] The depression was particularly acute in Melbourne, where the population dropped by 50 000 people between 1891 and 1893 as an exodus took place to the country, to somewhat more fortunate colonies such as New South Wales and Western Australia, or to New Zealand and South Africa. The city that only a few years before had been 'Marvellous Melbourne' was by 1893 a hell-hole. Ten thousand prostitutes, with a life expectancy of three years from the time they started selling their bodies to feed themselves and their children, roamed Melbourne's streets. Thousands died in the epidemics of influenza, typhoid and measles that swept the city in 1891 and 1892, as the human excreta from the hospital was dumped on the city's market gardens and dairy farms or allowed to run off into the water supply. Children were abandoned and babies killed by distraught parents, post-mortems being carried out on over 500 infants by just one doctor in Melbourne in 1892–93. In house after house, the *Melbourne Age* newspaper reported, one found a 'kitchen with its empty shelves, the fireless grate, the solitary crust on a plate placed high up on the dresser to be out of the reach of the children', and men, women and children emaciated, destitute, hopeless.[58]

Little wonder that Mick headed north across the Murray River into the Riverina district of New South Wales. He tramped through arid, depressed countryside with its vastness, its silence, its sense of isolation. He caught and ate rabbits, brewed his billy, slept in hollow eucalyptus trees, and became one of the hardy breed of self-respecting bushmen who roamed the Australian outback seeking work, not charity. The members of this rural working class were quite different from the 'sundowners' who drifted around the countryside, arriving at stations late in the day, looking for a handout. The bushmen were physically, mentally and emotionally strong and independent. They trusted in their own judgment and resourcefulness because they had to in order to survive. They were not too concerned with material possessions or their own affairs. They distrusted authority, deferred to no-one as their better, believed in the inherent dignity, worth and basic equality of all men, and valued mateship

above all else. In later years Michael Joseph Savage looked back on these early experiences and said he regretted none of them. They provided the best possible education for understanding men and women and the real meaning of life.[59] The 'tupenny child' had become 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief'.

III
THE WILDERNESS YEARS
1893–1900

WHEN MICHAEL SAVAGE arrived in the Riverina he found 'hundreds of men . . . tramping across wind-swept plains and over mud-choked roads, without swags and owning no earthly possession save the rags which hang around their half-starved carcases'.[1] The bushworkers and displaced farmers were augmented by 'hoards of artisans, labourers, clerks, larrikins, and social camp followers . . . swarming out of the cities into the poverty-cursed country districts'.[2] There were old men and boys scarcely into their teens. Deaths from accident, exposure, sickness and starvation were not uncommon[3] as men, and women also, tramped the long, lonely miles from station to station, trying to find work beyond the horizon, which vanished with their hopes in the distant heat haze. Labour was over-plentiful and most squatters and farmers, struggling to pay high interest on what little credit they could obtain and receiving little if any return from stock or crops, were reducing their numbers of station-hands and casual labourers. Nor could most afford, as tradition demanded, to feed the hundreds of ravenous travellers who called looking for work. Squatters pulled down their travellers' huts and even the more generous limited their hand-outs to a pint of flour. As a result the unemployed man was forced to sleep 'cold under the shelter of wire fences' or to 'spend . . . nights beneath the branches of a gum tree on traveller's fare and walk half a mile through water up to the waist every evening for his pannikin of flour'.[4] In the few huts that remained and around the fires of numerous temporary camps, strange companies of weary, footsore, hungry and resentful men met night after night to share what little food they had and to curse the economic and political system that condemned them to unemployment, deprivation and social degradation in a country with great natural wealth.

The Riverina's seemingly endless, flat plains, swept in summer by a dry westerly wind, were covered by large sheep stations, some of which

were already starting to be broken up for farming. Winters were very cold and sometimes wet. In summer the sunshine was blinding, the air suffocating and the heat oppressive, often over 110 degrees in the shade and continuing throughout the night. The population of the Riverina was very heterogeneous in origin: Scottish and Ulster Presbyterians, German Lutherans, Irish Catholics, English Anglicans, Welsh non-conformists, Aborigines and a large Chinese minority. Two-thirds were Australian-born, one third was Catholic, and many had come via Sydney, Victoria, South Australia and New Zealand.

On the Murrumbidgee River, which flowed through the Riverina, and midway on the railway line connecting Sydney, 500 kilometres to the north-east, and Melbourne, 430 kilometres to the south-west, lay the town of Wagga Wagga, with a population of 4500. Wagga Wagga, Aborigine for 'the place of the crows', was aptly named. The 'sable-winged, iron-beaked, cruel-clawed, white-eyed messengers of death' were the curse of the grazier and settler and were somehow symbolic of the environment. Even healthy sheep were often enveloped by a 'death-dealing crowd' of birds and, of any 10 000 sheep, 'scarcely a thousand can boast the possession of two whole eyes—many have none at all'.[5] There was no work at Wagga, the gateway to the Riverina, so Savage pressed on a further 100 kilometres inland to the smaller, outback settlement of Narrandera.

Narrandera, another railroad junction, was an isolated union fortress hemmed in by the large holdings of the squatters. Because it had a strong commercial interest, it is misleading to label Narrandera at that time a 'union town', but the shearers', general labourers' and railwaymen's unions were certainly very strong there, and on a population basis it was the most highly industrialised town in the Riverina. A large proportion of Narrandera's population of 1700 was also 'made up of Chinamen and blackfellows'[6] and even one of the town's two newspapers referred to Narrandera as 'a town remarkable for sin, sand, and a Chinese camp of abnormal dimensions'.[7] Several months after leaving Benalla, Savage walked thirty-eight kilometres north of Narrandera through a sea of liquid mud to the North Yanco Station. He was to remain there for the following seven years.

In 1893 North Yanco was a station of 90 000 acres of freehold land and 15 000 acres of crown leasehold, running 32 kilometres north from a 20-kilometre frontage on the Murrumbidgee River. It carried 100 000 merino sheep, 100 head of cattle and 100 horses. Although much of the land had been cleared, it was a well-timbered station with many stands of boree, pine, box, needlebrush, yarran, kurrajung and swamp-oak. The homestead, which was 'purely gothic in character . . . with its lofty rooms, cathedral-like doors, book-cases and over-mantels in carved oak',[8] had been built alongside the river in order to have easy access to water in summer. But in winter the gardens, yards and men's quarters often became 'a very slough of despond' as the Murrumbidgee flooded.

The station was owned by two brothers, James Henry Douglas and Charles Hill Douglas, who also owned the Walla Walla Station further south. In 1893 they were visiting their native Scotland, where James Douglas rented the estate of the Earl of Abercrombie and retired. When Michael Savage arrived on the station it was being managed by Albert Hill, a member of a numerous family of prominent pastoralists, financiers and politicians. One member of the Hill family had owned a large sheep station in the Mataura River district of southern New Zealand and another had been the New Zealand manager of the Bank of New South Wales. They were very tolerant in religion and very much at home with Aborigines, several of the family being among the founders of the Aborigines' Protection Society and Board. Albert Hill was a member of the local committee of the Pastoralists' Union and the Sheep Board and chairman of the Pastures and Stock Board. Although the owners and manager of North Yanco were very quick to prosecute trespassers,[9] they had the reputation of being relatively generous employers and were also among the first squatters in the district to allow tenant farmers and selectors on their property.

Labourers, such as Michael Savage now became, were at the very bottom of the sheep station social hierarchy after the owner, manager, overseers, wool-classers, book-keepers, stockmen, shepherds, blacksmiths, cooks, horse-breakers, wagon-drivers, carpenters, mechanics, machine operators, windmill specialists, and boundary riders. At the start of 1893 a station labourer's wage was 20*s*. a week, paid monthly in arrears, together with accommodation and rations.[10] If a worker was sacked for any reason, he forfeited all wages due. Because of the great surplus of labour available after 1893, however, it was not uncommon to find station-hands working for as little as 5–7*s*. and tucker, usually fatty mutton or beef and water.[11] Vegetables were almost unknown.

Mick Savage and other station labourers habitually worked about thirteen hours a day, six days a week. They had to work the seventh day also if required. Station-hands rose at 5 a.m. and finished work about 9 p.m., with breaks for meals at 7 a.m., noon and about 5 p.m. These men had to be physically very tough to survive. The work was extremely heavy, overseers saw that there was no slacking, and the working environment was atrocious. In addition to heat, wind, dust or mud, the country alongside the Murrumbidgee and around Narrandera teemed with snakes, sandflies, mosquitos and huge bushflies. The hordes of insects, incessantly biting and stinging, almost drove men mad as the labourers toiled in sweat and silence for long hours, clearing bush and rubbish from the fields; dug with pick, shovel and wheelbarrow mile after mile of irrigation ditches; built equally interminable fences; sank huge tanks; removed thousands of cubic metres of soil and rock; and piled the excavated debris up into dams and embankments. They fought a constant battle against the moving mass of rabbits that infested the North Yanco

Station, killing in three weeks alone 50 000, whose rotting carcases, dumped into a huge pile, created a frightful stench.[13]

Fire was an ever-present danger to the large stations as well as to the small farmers. A few months after Savage started working at North Yanco, several major fires broke out in the district, destroying over 250 000 acres of grass and burning out dozens of small settlers.[14] For weeks the night sky along a 65-kilometre front from north-west to north-east of Narrandera vividly reflected the raging infernos. At Binya, 90 000 acres were destroyed, and 70 000 on the Brookong run. Mick Savage spent his first Christmas on the Riverina fighting a fire, which started at three places before joining together into a conflagration described as 'one of the largest ever seen in the neighbourhood'.[15] At North Yanco 20 000 acres of grass were burnt out along with stock, woolsheds, fences, and many selectors' houses and crops.

Life generally on a station such as North Yanco was not only very hard for station-hands, it was also dreary, demeaning and often squalid. In order to hold a job, a labourer was often expected to behave 'like a well-trained dog' until he was 'too old and decrepit to be of service'.[16] It was accepted that managers and overseers were justified in using physical violence to maintain order on the stations. In 1896, for example, an overseer on the North Yanco Station was acquitted after being charged with assaulting an elderly worker who had complained about the quality of food that had been served for dinner. Although it was proven that the assault had taken place, the Justices of the Peace who heard the case dismissed the charge on the grounds that, 'in rows of this kind described a little violence was sometimes necessary to preserve law and order'.[17]

The station-hands at North Yanco had one escape from the monotonous routine of bush life. Occasionally they could visit Narrandera and get drunk in one of its pubs, drinking glass after glass of booze at 6*d*. a time. Little wonder that some, after the alcohol had released their pent-up frustrations, behaved in a boisterous or even violent manner, as in 1897, when six of Savage's fellow station-hands from North Yanco went looking for prostitutes in the Chinese camp and ended up receiving fines of 20*s*. or fourteen days imprisonment for riotous conduct.[18]

There was an alternative to drunken rowdiness as an expression of protest against human working conditions. During the 1880s, especially after laws legalising trade unions were passed in New South Wales in 1881 and Victoria and Queensland in 1886, there developed in the mines and on the sheep stations of the Australian outback new unions made up of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. The Amalgamated Miners' Association (formed in 1873 and revived in 1882), the Amalgamated Shearers' Union (formed in 1886), and the General Laborers' Union (formed in 1890) were the major rural unions in Victoria and the Riverina. Unlike the older, urban-based craft unions, these new unions attempted to inspire, organise and unite all workers in a given industry, and they

found a ready response among the shearers and other bushworkers. Several Australian historians have argued persuasively that the Australian frontier worker, because of the harsh geographic environment, found it difficult to become an independent farmer and his own master and became reconciled to a future as a wage-earner battling for economic survival.[19] The new unionism offered a possibility that, by combining with his fellow workers, he might protect his job, win better wages and conditions, and discomfit the wealthy squatters who exploited him. The unions emphasised mateship, the inherent dignity and essential equality of all men, and made solidarity the greatest virtue and 'scabbing' on another worker by taking his job the greatest sin.

The man most associated with the formation of all three major rural unions—the AMA, the ASU and the GLU—was William Guthrie Spence, who asserted that working conditions were poor and wages low because of 'the need of the workers and the greed of employers. With the lands and machinery in the hands of the few, the mass are forced into wage slavery, and hence the trade union is a necessity'.[20] Only by uniting together, Spence believed, could the workers resist the employers, as 'they cut down the cost of production by lowering wages and by the displacement of labour by machines', to the point where 'the few required to attend to the machines are but a part of the machinery of the factory, and are counted, not as human beings, but as "hands" '.[21] In the union a worker found a sense of belonging to a caring community, which understood his expectations and frustrations and gave him an identity, an explanation of his place in life, and a future goal for which to strive. If religion can be described as both a comprehensive world view and a faith by which men and women live, then the new unionism was very much a secular religion.

When Michael Savage arrived at North Yanco in 1893 he found on the station a number of active members of the ASU and the GLU, including a labourer who the year before had been one of three nominees for secretaryship of the Wagga Wagga branch of the GLU.[22] Savage was recruited into the GLU shortly after arriving at North Yanco and thus commenced his formal connection with the organised Labour movement.[23] In early 1894 the shearers and labourers, after several years of discussion, united and Savage became a member of the new Australian Workers' Union.[24] It was a dangerous year for a shearer or station labourer to be a trade union member.

A fall in the price of wool in 1886 had led to the pastoralists seeking to cut costs by reducing the contract price for shearing sheep from £1 to 17*s*. 6*d*. This provided the stimulus for the growth of the ASU, and between 1886 and 1889 there were more strikes in the pastoral industry than in all other Australian industries combined.[25] Some were very bitter, for example the dispute at the large Brookong Station south-east of Narrandera, which ended with nine unionists being sentenced to up

to three years' hard labour. The aggressive and partly successful tactics of the ASU led to the squatters forming their own Pastoralists' Association, and the onset of the depression at the end of the 1880s reinforced the employers' determination to resist further union demands. The great maritime strike of late 1890 in Australia and New Zealand was the most decisive industrial battle in Australasian history. It ended in the defeat of the seamen, waterside workers, shearers, miners, and various other transport and trade unions who participated. The employers' victory, the relative weakness of the vanquished unions, the worsening economic and financial situation after 1890, and the great surplus of mobile, desperate, non-union labour available all encouraged hard-pressed squatters and other employers not only to hold costs but to reduce them by lowering wages. The unions tried to resist, but the shearers were beaten again in Queensland in 1891 and the miners at Broken Hill in 1892.

The squatters had lived through drought, flood, fire and almost every other conceivable disaster, only to see a lifetime's work endangered by what they regarded as the avarice of rapacious banks, the land hunger of foolish farmers, and the unreasonable demands of militant unionists. Banks backed by the law were difficult for the squatters to defeat. Casual, itinerant workers, even when organised by a strong union, were more vulnerable. In 1894 a majority of the Australian Pastoralists' Association's Federal Council decided unilaterally to abandon an agreement on wages and conditions for shearers agreed to with the ASU in 1891 and a majority of Australia's pastoralists reduced the rates paid. The squatters also wrote into the 1894 agreement a clause that said that the decisions of the employer or his representative would 'be final and conclusive' on all questions in the shearing shed.[26] The defeat of the shearers in 1890 and 1891, the obvious availability of non-union labour, the desire of union shearers themselves to obtain work after a winter of unemployment, and the financial weakness of the AWU all made union resistance to the employers' ultimatum difficult. The pastoralists on the large stations, however, had hundreds of thousands of sheep to be shorn in a certain time and at a reasonable standard and most were reluctant to fall further into debt to the hated banks as the result of a protracted dispute. The union leaders hoped, therefore, that if the shearers remained solidly united, the pastoralists would revert to the 1891 agreement. Union camps sprang up near the large stations, especially those shearing early in the season, and union pickets tried to prevent shearers signing on at the new rates. The strikers were supported financially from levies on shearers working at stations that sheared under the 1891 agreement and contributions from permanent hands, such as Savage, who were union members but not involved directly in the dispute.

Newspapers almost daily reported clashes and rumours of clashes between unionists and managers, unionists and non-unionists, unionists and police. Travellers in rural areas were stopped and cross-examined at

union checkpoints on roads and at railway stations; armed bands roamed the countryside and raided isolated sheep stations at night; men who wanted to work at the squatters' rates were kidnapped on the road or from stations and held prisoner in union camps; woolsheds were burnt down; gun-battles took place; a river steamer carrying non-union shearers was attacked and burnt; and station food was poisoned.[27] Little wonder that the Sydney *Bulletin* claimed that the situation was not a shearers' strike but an 'insurrection'.[28]

The Pastoralists' Association made a special effort in 1894 to recruit shearers from New Zealand. When the ASU had been formed in 1886, it sent organisers to New Zealand from the Riverina and enrolled 2300 members, including many Maoris, for whom the union rules had to be translated. Spence, who visited New Zealand the following year, had decided that the New Zealand shearers should manage their own affairs, although there remained thereafter a close relationship between Australian and New Zealand workers. In 1894 New Zealand union leaders promised their full support to the AWU, and the treasurer of the Christchurch union of shearers and labourers, Mrs Aileen Garmson, sailed across the Tasman on a ship carrying New Zealand shearers and persuaded over half of those who did embark on a ship not to honour their contracts in Australia.[29] Others did work, however, often despite rough treatment at the hands of the strikers.

Nowhere was the strike fought harder than at North Yanco, one of the first stations to start shearing each year and, therefore, regarded as a trendsetter in wages and agreements. Hill, the manager at North Yanco, called the roll for shearers and rouseabouts to shear 110 000 sheep on 10 August 1894.[30] He offered 5*s*. less per hundred than the union minimum. By that time the station was being picketed from a union camp established 275 metres from the woolshed, and only four shearers accepted Hill's offer. By the end of August tension was rising and the police sergeant and two constables resident at North Yanco Station were reinforced. After a fortnight of complete deadlock, twelve New Zealand shearers arrived and signed on at North Yanco, possibly Savage's first encounter with a sizeable number of New Zealanders. Hill also took the unusual and provocative step of employing twenty-five aborigines, 'who he knew were good shearers'.[31] This enraged the AWU, which expressed surprise that there were no Chinese as on several other stations, but the strike at North Yanco was clearly broken. The union camp dispersed and forty of the unionists who offered to start work found that they were too late and had to proceed elsewhere. North Yanco successfully cut out 600 000 pounds of 'splendid quality' wool by mid-October at Pastoralists' Association rates and conditions. The strike had already been called off in Queensland by the end of September and by the end of October it was completely broken in New South Wales.[32] Throughout Australia, shearers who had remained loyal to the union faced victimisation and were refused work

at station after station, even at the lower rates.

Savage not only arrived in the Riverina in time for the 1894 shearers' strike but also found himself voting in the Murrumbidgee electorate in probably the most fiercely contested and widely publicised political contest of the 1894 New South Wales elections. The failure of the 1890 strike had been followed by the rapid formation of political Labour Parties throughout Australia; in New South Wales, the Labour Electoral League. Much of the impetus for independent Labour candidates, especially outside Sydney, came from the ASU and the GLU, which resented the government's apparent use of courts and police to support employers against unionists during strikes. The increase in the number of Labour candidates was also encouraged by the payment of elected members after 1891, at first £300 per annum.

At the 1891 elections, Labour won one of three seats in the multiple-member Murrumbidgee electorate, which included Wagga Wagga, Narrandera and North Yanco. Savage was enrolled in this seat from early 1894 until 1900.[33] The successful Labour candidate in the Murrumbidgee electorate was a controversial New Zealander, Arthur Rae, the most prominent leader of the shearers and bushworkers in the Riverina throughout the 1890s.[34] 'Firebrand' or 'Revolutionary' Rae's views and activities permeated industrial and political news in the district during the decade. A staunch republican, an enthusiastic proponent of women's suffrage, an advocate of land and monetary reform, and a believer in compulsory arbitration in industrial disputes, Rae often referred favourably to New Zealand.

In 1894 Rae found his electoral base eroded by boundary changes. Wagga Wagga was made into a separate seat, with the Murrumbidgee becoming a single-member constituency comprising the towns of Narrandera and Junee and the surrounding countryside. Although supported very strongly by the *Narrandera Argus*, whose independent, humane and outspoken editor, James Ashton, contested and won, as a free-trader and proponent of Henry George's single-tax policy, the neighbouring seat of Hay, Rae lost his seat to a conservative station-owner by 711 votes to 704.[35] Labour was partly compensated for its loss of Murrumbidgee in 1894 by winning the electorate of Young, north of Wagga Wagga. There, with strong AWU support, John Watson, a printer and president of the NSW branch of the Australian Labour Federation, who had arrived from Oamaru in New Zealand in 1886, became the member and subsequently in 1904 the first Labour Prime Minister of Australia.[36]

Rae, Watson and the New Zealand shearers on North Yanco during the 1984 strike were not the only causes of an awakening interest in New Zealand, which a few years later was to attract Savage to that country. In their spare time station-hands read whatever newspapers and magazines they could find, sometimes passed down from station-owners and managers. The Riverina papers contained a large amount of news about

New Zealand, often more items about 'Maoriland' than about Western and Southern Australia, Tasmania or Queensland.[37] Before the federation of Australia in 1900, Australia was not a national entity and New Zealand, to most people in New South Wales and northern Victoria, was no more insular than Tasmania or remote than Western Australia. New Zealand was regarded as just another Australasian colony.

The news from New Zealand covered economic, political, social, industrial, farming and sporting news, and details of earthquakes, Maori affairs, shipwrecks such as that of the *Wairarapa* in 1894, accidents, murders and the election of a woman mayor in the Auckland suburb of Onehunga. New Zealand was usually portrayed as economically prosperous, industrially harmonious, socially advanced and politically well governed compared to New South Wales and Victoria in the 1890s. Editorials suggested strongly that New Zealand was well worthy of emulation by the other Australasian colonies. In 1898, for example, the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* noted that New Zealand was 'a good name for the colony if you come to think of it—New Zeal-land, always zeal to do something, whether good, bad, or indifferent; they must be on the move; perhaps because the earthquakes shake 'em up'.[38] Photo supplements showed New Zealand's natural scenic beauty;[39] novels such as E. Doidge's *A Little Maori Waif* were serialised month after month;[40] sporting columns were written by 'Taranaki', who seemed to know as much about New Zealand horses and races as about Australian; and a Maori concert party toured the Riverina.[41]

One paper that contained a great deal of New Zealand news and was undoubtedly read by Savage was the AWU's *Worker*, which started life in Wagga Wagga in October 1891 as the *Hummer*, printed for the Wagga branches of the ASU and GLU by the New Zealander Annie Rae, wife of Arthur Rae. The *Hummer*, which became the NSW *Worker* in September 1892, contained a regular 'Maoriland Matters' or 'Maoriland Notes' column and had its own correspondents in Wellington and Waimate, the latter a J. O'Brien, secretary of the New Zealand Workers' Union. The *Worker*, which went to every ASU, GLU and, after 1894, AWU member, informed its readers about New Zealand events and compared them with the situation in Australia, usually to the latter country's disadvantage. In arguing that New Zealand should not join the Australian Federation, for example, the *Worker* referred to 'the well-being of Maoriland under its present system of majority rule' and concluded that 'New Zealand should continue on her present lines for she has gone further already in the direction of human freedom than any of her sister settlements. A federated Australia might well look to her as an example of orderly legislative progress in social reform'.[42]

The newspapers Savage read did more than create a favourable impression of New Zealand. Their coverage of specific issues of the day and general political and economic theories broadened and deepened his

education. The NSW and Queensland editions of the *Worker*, in particular, as Spence noted, became 'the educators of our members. They give extension lectures. They tell of progress made. They set forth the ideals of the great Labor Movement. In that sense they do university work, and the cost is more than repaid in the enlightenment of our members, who are notoriously the best informed of Australian unionists'.[43] Both local and union newspapers, and the muckraking political journals such as the *Bulletin* and *Truth*, discussed repeatedly, in detail, and with partisan force the protection-free trade debate, the ownership and use of land, the clash between capital and labour, the causes of the ongoing depression, the nature of the financial system, and the desirability or otherwise of the federation of Australia. On the last of those issues, despite the opposition of Rae, the Riverina was overwhelmingly in favour. In the 1899 federation referendum, for example, Sydney was evenly divided, but the Riverina, which looked towards Victoria and Melbourne rather than to Sydney anyway, helped carry New South Wales into the federation. The Murrumbidgee electorate voted 1441–424 in favour and this was reflected in the North Yanco vote of 73 to 13.[44]

Savage could not but be moved by the hundreds of heart-rending stories of poverty and suffering reported in the papers. His own personal experiences of grief and hardship were reinforced by the widespread human agony he saw so many others enduring. A woman with six children aged two to twelve became sick and died while her unemployed husband was away from Narrandera over Christmas looking for work. There was half a loaf of stale bread in the house and a doctor found that the woman was suffering from advanced malnutrition, having for a long time given whatever food she could obtain to her children.[45] In a similar case where the husband was away seeking work, another woman with no food in the house was taken ill. Because there was no room in the benevolent hospital, she was charged with having insufficient means of support and convicted so that she could be remanded to the prison hospital for treatment.[46] A widowed shearer, despairing of finding work, shot himself and his two crippled children aged ten and twelve.[47] A well-known unionist started to go blind and was placed in a benevolent asylum. He left and tried to find work in order to retain his independence, and when that failed, killed himself rather than return to the asylum. He wrote to his union mates,

> I have battled for work and am out of the running. It is hard for a man when he has health and strength, let alone when he has defective sight. Now there is only one thing open, and that is a charitable institution; and as I have had a taste of them I know what they are. A man loses his self-respect and independence. . . . My last words to the boys are: Organise! Organise![48]

The sorry plight of women attracted the attention of the papers, especially the *Hummer*, which consistently and fervently advocated not only women's

suffrage but also a much wider choice of jobs for women, the recruitment of women into unions, equal pay and status for equal work irrespective of sex, and a recognition politically, economically and socially of the equality of the sexes.[49] The *Hummer* had a regular 'Our Sisters' column and the *Worker* a very interesting and radical women's column by 'Vida', who contended that 'If mothers were not slaves, children would be born free'.[50] Citing the New Zealand National Council of Women, the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* suggested that 'parents must give their daughters an education to make them self-reliant. Marriage was a secondary consideration'.[51] Even the usually very conservative *Narandera Ensign* supported votes for women, its editor commenting with unconscious sexism that, 'It is . . . ridiculous to suppose that a Cabinet of old women can seriously oppose the extension of the franchise to females'.[52]

The newspapers also provided a forum for the theoretical discussion of the causes of and possible remedies for Australia's economic malaise. The views of several of those theorists were to have a lifelong influence on Savage and most other radical politicians of his generation. One writer, who was deeply concerned at the presence of poverty in the midst of plenty and who blamed the situation on the inefficient use of land, was the American Henry George. George, who outlined his analysis in a book *Progress and Poverty* (1879), and who had married an Australian, Annie Fox, in 1861, revisited Australia in 1890 and lectured to huge audiences. He was not a socialist and opposed collective action either by the state or monopolies, both of which, if unrestricted, interfered with the individual's right to liberty and happiness. George was a populariser of John Stuart Mill's ideas on land, arguing that those who hoarded, speculated in, and inefficiently used land had built a barrier between nature's bounty and people's needs. Land-owners became rich not by using money and credit to maximise production on their properties, to pay for improvements, to hire labour and to produce goods; instead they used money and credit for non-productive speculation and locked up land, using it inefficiently until its shortage or the effect of community investment in roads, railways or public works forced up the demand and the price. The speculator then sold at a great profit, the unearned increment or capital gain; the moneylender got the interest; the would-be producer-purchaser was saddled with an artificially high land debt, greatly increasing his cost of production; and the community generally not only had to meet the cost of repaying the public works' debt but also had to pay higher prices for food. George's solution was simple. Any increase in the value of land caused by the presence or actions of the community as a whole, as distinct from the value of improvements clearly created by an individual's own efforts, should belong to the community. If land values went up, not because the land had been cleared, fenced and developed but because there was an artificial shortage, or because the land was fortunately near a settlement, or because it received the benefit of roads, bridges and railways

built by the public, then the increased value belonged to the community and should be appropriated by a single tax on the unearned increment. Such a tax would make it unprofitable for any person to speculate or hold land in anticipation of a capital gain without developing the land to its maximum use. Land and money would become more readily available for productive purposes, leading in turn to many more people owning and improving land, a greater demand for labour, and lower consumer prices, which would no longer reflect the inflation caused by scarcity, speculation and artificially high interest rates.

George's ideas were widely read and discussed in Australia and New Zealand during the 1880s and 1890s and were accepted by many bushmen and others opposed to the squatters and the land speculators. Among George's most prominent disciples in the Riverina were Arthur Rae, James Ashton, the editor of the *Narrandera Argus* who became MLA for Hay in 1894, and Walter Head, the secretary of both the Wagga Wagga ASU and the Murrumbidgee Land Tax Association, and editor of the *Hummer*. Many others in the AWU and LEL were influenced by George, including Frank Cotton, the Labour MLA for Newtown, who was 'the chief parliamentary exponent of the land value taxers'.[53] Although Savage was never a 'single taxer', and was later to argue that increasing the availability of money and credit rather than land was the key to unlocking and stimulating production and employment, his early belief in the usehold value of land and lifelong dislike of land speculation and the unearned increment undoubtedly owed much to George's analysis of this problem. Savage always regarded land as a resource held in trust, not a private possession the misuse of which was of no concern to society generally.

Perhaps more influential on the Australian Labour movement in the 1890s were the socialist ideas of another American. Edward Bellamy, who coincidentally died in May 1898, only seven months after George's death, emphasised the desirability of social and economic co-operation replacing competition. In his utopian novel, *Looking Backward*, published in 1887, Bellamy described the life of a socialist America in the year A.D. 2000. Drawing on the theories of Karl Marx, Bellamy envisaged an ideal, co-operative, egalitarian society in which neither profit nor money existed, production and distribution of an immense industrial economy were planned and managed by the state, and people lived together in a spirit of love and harmony. Everyone worked according to ability and received income, through the use of credit cards, equally according to their needs. Bellamy's socialist utopia was, he claimed, 'nothing less than a literal fulfilment on a complete social scale, of Christ's inculcation that all should feel the same solicitude and make the same effort for the welfare of others as for their own.'[54] In later years in New Zealand, Savage was to give copies of *Looking Backward* to interested friends and acquaintances and suggest that everyone should read Bellamy's work, and Savage's own speeches as a Labour M.P. and leader clearly reflected Bellamy's theories.

Bellamy, and other socialist writers such as Laurence Gronlund, who published his *Co-operative Commonwealth* in 1884, and William Morris, the English poet and art-craftsman, who wrote *News From Nowhere* in 1891, believed that in the machine age the problem was not the production of wealth but its organisation and distribution. Society had to reconcile, on the one hand, over-production and mechanisation and, on the other, under-consumption and unemployment. Redistribution of wealth and shorter working hours were the obvious answers. Social justice was impossible under capitalism. Co-operation, distribution according to needs, and production for use must replace competition, wage slavery, and production for private profit. The essential link between socialism and the trade union movement was their common emphasis on co-operative action, mateship rather than individualism.

In Australia, Bellamy's utopian socialism was popularised through the columns of the *Hummer* and the Queensland *Worker*, whose editors, Head and, more importantly, William Lane, not only serialised *Looking Backward* but tried to create a utopian settlement in South America. Savage undoubtedly followed with interest the saga of Lane's 'New Australia' colony in Paraguay. Rae was vice-chairman of the New Australia Co-operative, Head was treasurer, and the secretaries of the Wagga Wagga and Bourke branches of the GLU—James Mooney and Tom Hall—both resigned in 1893 to sail with Lane and 220 other settlers aboard the *Royal Tar* to Paraguay.[55] The experiment ended in disaster, with the colonists divided and impoverished, Head changing his name and vanishing from sight,[56] and the visionary, authoritarian and sanctimonious Lane ending his life as the very conservative and imperialistic editor of the *New Zealand Herald*.[57]

It was little wonder that many Australians sought their Utopia by leaving Australia in the 1890s, heading if not to Paraguay then at least to New Zealand or South Africa. In the wake of the economic depression and the industrial strife of the early part of the decade came, from 1896 until 1902, the longest and most severe drought in the recorded history of the country. The days and nights were blisteringly hot. Grass almost ceased to exist on North Yanco and throughout the Riverina. Rivers, swamps and irrigation tanks dried up. The land became red dust and was blown away. Fences were covered by shifting sand banks. Huge, wind-whipped dust-storms frequently enveloped Narrandera and the surrounding countryside, turning the harsh glare of daylight suddenly into complete darkness. Incessant grit in the air blinded the eye and rasped the already seared lung. Seething swarms of locusts and grasshoppers stripped the Riverina of what sparse vegetation remained.[58] Stock numbers were halved by the loss of fifty million sheep and five million cattle.[59]

The protracted drought ended any remote hope that Savage might have had of selecting a farm of his own. Many farmers already occupying

land found that the drought consumed their stock, crops and meagre capital. Even so, the dwindling amount of land opened for homestead selection continued to attract far more applicants than there were allotments; 24 100 applications in the ballot for forty-six blocks on Brookong, for example.[60] Because of the nature of the land and the climate, such selections were 435 to 700 acres, with values of 32*s.* to 46*s.* per acre,[61] well beyond the reach of a station-hand. Successful applicants also had to prove to Crown Land boards that they had sufficient capital to develop and work allotments if they were awarded. A station-hand on the Tubbo Station near North Yanco probably expressed Savage's thoughts when he wrote, 'We found ourselves . . . calculating our chances in a land sweep and picturing our speedy settlement on the land with our financial weather thus: cash in bank—nought; in debt £10; cash in house 7*s.* 6*d.*, also four kids and a cockatoo; wages due £4. 19*s.* 3*d.* Conclusion—can't be done.'[62] The New South Wales Government also announced in 1899 that 'it will not be long before the land fit for closer settlement will all be taken up.'[63] There was, therefore, little to keep Savage on North Yanco except the realisation that employment throughout Victoria and New South Wales was as difficult to find as it ever had been. The *Pastoralists' Review* estimated that in the Riverina in the mid-nineties 'the supply of labour is about 75 per cent in excess of the demand.'[64]

North Yanco itself was to change dramatically after 1898. Tragedy struck the owner, Charles Hill Douglas, early in that year. In March, just as Douglas and his daughter were leaving the homestead for the church where the daughter was to be married, Douglas's only son, the seventeen-year-old Bertie, shot himself in the head. The wedding was adjourned, the son died, and Douglas, already suffering from cancer of the jaw, died suddenly himself ten days later.[65] In July the North Yanco Station was sold for £220,000 to Samuel McCaughey, who seemed to have ample funds to take advantage of the recession and greatly increase his already considerable holdings.[66]

McCaughey was one of the wealthiest pastoralists and the largest individual owner of sheep in Australia.[67] Each year over one million sheep were shorn on his vast properties and he was commonly known as 'the wool king'. He was one of the pioneers of irrigation in the Riverina, and before 1898 had used dams, natural waterways, empty channels and cuttings to divert water from the Murrumbidgee onto his Coonong and Coree Stations. McCaughey's major experiment with irrigation was to be his North Yanco acquisition. Between 1898 and 1903 he constructed a dam twenty-eight kilometres long, built 320 kilometres of channels, flooded 10 000 acres of land, irrigated another 40 000 acres, and constructed a magnificent mansion built of sandstone and hundreds of thousands of home-made bricks, and set in eight acres of irrigated gardens and orchards 365 metres from the bank of the Murrumbidgee. He cleared

the station of rabbits and restocked North Yanco with his favourite Vermont and Peppin sheep, the finest sheep in the Riverina, often winning every prize at stock competitions. McCaughey had large, well-equipped workshops at Coonong and later at North Yanco, where his blacksmiths and mechanics, working to McCaughey's own plans, made ploughs, cultivators, windmills, chaff-cutters, pumps, graders, ditch-diggers and earth scoops known as 'tumbling tommies'.

By January 1899 'Coonong's mighty millionaire' was personally supervising the construction of his new home and the irrigation works at North Yanco. A small army of men and 150 draught horses descended on the station. Already he had established a mill to run out bridge timber. Huge pumps were worked by engines powered by boilers. Massive steam ploughs ripped up the landscape. When Savage had first started tank-sinking and ditch-digging at North Yanco for Douglas in 1893 the work had been done by pick, shovel, wheelbarrow, horse and dray. The tanks were up to six metres deep and sometimes over 38 000 cubic metres of earth had to be laboriously excavated by hand. McCaughey's 'tumbling tommy', an ingenious, revolving earth-scoop consisting of a conveyor belt of buckets on four wheels, was operated by a driver who refilled and released loads as the contraption trundled in and out of the irrigation ditches. At the height of the scheme McCaughey had twenty-nine 'tumbling tommies' operating at North Yanco and Savage soon became expert in using the 'muck-shifting' machine to scoop out mile after mile of deep channelling on the massive and extensive earthworks. Because the machines needed constant servicing, Savage and the other drivers also became ad hoc mechanics nursing their temperamental charges. McCaughey's labour-saving devices speeded up the construction and cut its cost by half.[68] Although Savage was fascinated by the irrigation scheme and became a firm believer in its value in transforming the Riverina, he also realised that the mechanisation was not only cutting costs and lightening manual labour but also displacing workers who had traditionally worked with pick and shovel. He continued to work for McCaughey on North Yanco as a 'tumbling tommy' driver until 1900.[69]

McCaughey, however, although remembered today as a generous philanthropist who left much of his wealth for the care and education of the widows and orphans of soldiers killed in the 1914–18 war, was a hard taskmaster and a bigoted Ulsterman. Even his two admiring biographers admit that not all men found 'the wool king of the world' to be an easy employer. Descended from a long line of Ulster Presbyterians who had been in the forefront of the Protestant Orange cause in Ireland since the days of the Stuarts, McCaughey endeavoured 'when practicable to engage men for station work, who hail from that part of the world in preference to any other . . . all who are not of that ilk stand a very poor chance of being taken on.'[70] One critic observed that it was impossible to work for McCaughey 'unless you are a sneak and a powerful

navvy. You must also be content to do work that usually commands high pay—for the sum of 15*s.* a week."[71] It was claimed that he had 'absolute contempt for his inferiors', begrudged pannikins of flour to swagmen, suggesting that they should be prepared to work for tucker without wages, did not provide travellers' huts on his stations, and had trespassers 'hunted by biped dogs'.[72] McCaughey disliked employees who were Catholics or unionists. Savage was both.

By the end of 1899 AWU organisers were reporting that 'unionism has declined considerably on the Riverina, and the workers suffer accordingly.'[73] In August 1900 McCaughey and the other pastoralists decided to pay rouseabouts in the shearing sheds £1 per week, and not the 30*s.* they were asking or the 25*s.* they had been paid the previous year. The rouseabouts at North Yanco refused to sign on at that wage and McCaughey ordered the station-hands to take their place.[74] This was scabbing, and union men who refused were dismissed. It is possible that Savage was among those sacked and certainly, in the midst of the drought and chronic unemployment, he left North Yanco about this time. It is, however, also possible that he had left or been dismissed for another unknown reason some time earlier. A fortnight before, at the beginning of August, a deputation from the unemployed at Narrandera had met the Hon. E.W. O'Sullivan, the Minister of Works, during his visit to the town, to plead for public works as a means of employing the large number of men without work in the district. One of the deputation of three was a man called Savage, and the only Savage on the electoral roll at the time who was not a member of a reasonably well-to-do business family related to the pioneer pastoralists the Jenkins brothers, was Michael Savage.[75] Although O'Sullivan agreed to establish public works, he did so with the proviso that no man who had left an employer paying less than the public service rate of 7*s.* per day, which McCaughey certainly did, would be taken on. This appeared to exclude Michael Savage.

Savage was not the type to stay around for any length of time waiting for work. As he had in 1893 and as he would again in 1907, Savage in 1900 went looking for employment and left the Riverina. Sydney was as uninviting a prospect in 1900 as Melbourne had been in 1893. Bubonic plague had broken out in Sydney earlier in the year and the 'prevalent country opinion' was that the city was 'wrapt in the embrace of a ravaging disease'.[76] Unemployment was also very serious there, with men flocking to the countryside in search of work. Although Victorians were also still migrating in thousands, Savage decided to return there. Two of his brothers and his father were now living near each other just south of the Murray River. Richard Savage senior was with Rowland and his family at Wahgunyah, where Rowland owned a hotel. William Savage was a carpenter at the North Prentice gold mine near Rutherglen, about 320 kilometres journey from North Yanco. Michael Savage joined William. The wilderness years had ended.

IV
THE SOCIALIST AWAKENED
1900–7

RUTHERGLEN IN 1900 was already only a hungover shadow of the once bustling, bawdy and brawling town whose earlier prosperity had been based on gold and grapes. Built on rising ground overlooking an otherwise flat and uninteresting plain, the town, eight kilometres south of the Murray River, had sprung up overnight to service the 20 000 people who rushed into the district following the discovery of gold in 1860.[1] The gold near the surface, however, was quickly worked out and by the early 1880s only about sixty fossicking miners remained. In 1886 a new lead was discovered, and companies with overseas capital moved in to follow the rich, gold-bearing reefs far underground. Within a short time eight large mines were employing 10 000 miners, and Rutherglen's population exploded to 30 000. But as the shafts went deeper, the immense flow of ancient, underground rivers overcame the expensive, modern, steam-powered pumps, especially as mines upstream closed and stopped pumping, thus increasing the pressure of water on the mines further downstream. By 1900 the mining industry at Rutherglen was in serious trouble; by 1905 only 1250 miners were left in a total population of about 2000; and by 1910 the gold industry at Rutherglen had collapsed. That disaster was compounded by the devastating outbreak in 1908–10 of the plant disease phylloxera, which completely, though fortunately only temporarily, destroyed the large vineyards that had made the Rutherglen-Wahgunyah region one of Victoria's major wine-growing areas since the 1850s.

Six kilometres north-east of Rutherglen was the North Prentice mine, which employed 200 men, most of whom lived in the North Prentice mine settlement. Michael Savage had intended to stay with his brother William for only a short time, but when he found that work was available in the mine he took it. He had worked in Ball's shop for seven years and in North Yanco for another seven. At the age of twenty-eight, Michael now

commenced a third septennium at North Prentice and Rutherglen. As at North Yanco, he often laboured up to his waist in icy water, but this time within the confining walls of dark, wet, subterranean shafts and tunnels, a working environment totally alien to the outdoor life to which he had been accustomed in the wide-open spaces and grit-blasted swelter of the Riverina.

The North Prentice Gold Mining Company, formed in 1893, had decided in 1899 to sink new shafts and modernise its mine.[2] But the shareholders were disappointed with the low dividends being paid and the difficulties faced in improving the mine and in meeting an increasing debt. Many refused to invest further when called upon to do so. In August 1901 the company was wound up by its creditors, the plant, buildings and mining leases being disposed of at a liquidation sale and the mine being allowed to fill with water. Savage again found himself unemployed.

In October 1901 a new company, the North Prentice and Southern Amalgamated, was formed to work the North Prentice mine in conjunction with the adjoining Southern and Prentice United mine, which was also at a standstill. In November the Savage brothers were re-employed. The announcement that £130,000 was to be spent expanding and improving the mine and that pumping equipment capable of raising 13 650 000 litres of water every twenty-four hours was to be installed led to renewed optimism about the future of North Prentice. The flooded shaft, 106 metres deep, was pumped out; the bottom level, some 346 metres long, was cleared and repaired; and the wet face at the end of the drive pushed a further 381 metres. Each day, as Savage and the other miners worked far below, the pumps raised and deposited over 9 000 000 litres of water onto the mutilated and undrained surface above them, and by 1903 the North Prentice and Southern mines were pumping 125 580 000 litres of water each week out of their shafts. By 1904 over £118,000 had been spent on opening and extending the North Prentice mine but little gold had been recovered because of continued flooding. With capital and confidence almost exhausted, the mine finally started yielding reasonable quantities of gold in 1905.

Savage hated and was appalled by his new life as a miner. The North Prentice mine was a claustrophobic sweating den deep in the bowels of the earth. Except for feeble candlelight, Savage worked in tomb-like darkness. The icy water, in marked contrast to the generally high temperatures in the mine, lapped round his aching legs and dripped incessantly from the roof of the low tunnel onto his cramped body. The already foul air was made more putrid, if that was possible, as men relieved themselves in the mud and slush of the mine. The rhythm of the pumps and the constantly creaking timber reverberating through the long tunnels to the distant shaft, the only path to safety, kept alive the fear of sudden flood or cave-in. Danger and death were ever-present threats and frequent realities.

Major disasters, such as the cave-in at the nearby McEvoy Eldorado mine in 1895, in which a sudden inundation of water, sand and slush snuffed out the lives of six miners, one of whom had eight children and two others four each, were fortunately not common in the Rutherglen district. But the local newspapers almost weekly reported serious accidents, half of them fatal, to individual miners. In their efforts to speed up the reopening of the North Prentice mine in 1900, the owners not only employed new workers, including Michael Savage, but also removed their manager, W. A. Bryant, because, according to the miners at his farewell, Bryant had always been careful not to place the lives of men in danger in order to save time or shareholders' money.[3] Bryant's successors at North Prentice appeared less concerned with the human cost of making the mine profitable as soon as possible. A few months later a North Prentice miner had his skull smashed in by a forty-pound shackle falling down the shaft. His widow received £50, not from the company or the government, neither of which had any liability to pay compensation, but from the union.[4] The following week another miner fell forty-five metres from a ladder down the North Prentice shaft.[5] A third worker in the mine was badly burnt around his head and neck when his candle triggered off fire damp, which blew back into his face.[6] Mine carpenters were particularly vulnerable as they shored up shafts and tunnels.[7] Sometimes, if a miner was killed, a company would offer work to the eldest son, but not only grown men and fathers died down the Rutherglen mines; a fifteen-year-old boy was crushed to death by a dirt lift.[8] The major maimer and killer of those who worked in the North Prentice and the other mines was not, however, the sudden, tragically dramatic accident.

Many more miners died slowly and painfully, old before their time. Ventilation was difficult in the deep mines, and the machine drills threw out clouds of very fine dust that destroyed the tissue of men's lungs and bronchial tubes. Initially a recurring cough and mild but persistent bronchitis were accompanied by an increasing breathlessness and tightness of chest. In an attempt to breathe more freely, the miners constantly expectorated a 'black spit' that teemed with disease germs. But crippling rheumatics, tuberculosis, miners' phthisis, and consumption could not be spat out. In Victoria in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, deaths from tuberculosis, for example, were six times as great among miners as among adult males in general, and the average age at which miners died was forty-five.[9]

Most died penniless. Until 1907 there was no basic minimum wage in Australia and, with a 'vast army, who exist on the very verge of pauperism, ready to crowd into any vacancy which may be created artificially by a strike',[10] wages could be and were depressed by employers, who were also quite prepared to threaten the use of Chinese labourers. Many workers in 1907 were earning, according to official statistics, only three-quarters of the wage they had received for the same

job in 1892.[11] Wages also varied considerably from mine to mine, where eight-hour shifts were worked around the clock. Miners worked a forty-eight hour week, for which the more fortunate were paid up to eight shillings a shift. Other workers, employed in exactly the same depressing, demanding, debilitating and dangerous conditions in another mine, received only half that amount. Savage and the men at North Prentice were among the worst paid, earning in 1902 between 3*s.* 4*d.* and 6*s.* 6*d.* per day.[12] The miners were not paid for the time taken to reach the face from the surface or to return above ground at the end of their shifts. This often took half an hour each way, for the pit face was sometimes nearly a kilometre, or more, from the shaft, and men who refused to stay underground for nine hours, one hour unpaid, were dismissed.[13] Their union, the Amalgamated Miners' Association, appeared powerless to protect its members.

Only one Australian in forty belonged to a trade union in 1901.[14] The first of the three main types of union, which Savage was not to experience first-hand until in later years he became a brewery worker in New Zealand, was the parochial, usually moderate, urban union made up of craftsmen and semi-skilled workers in the manufacturing and transport industries. The second type, the AWU to which Savage had belonged in the Riverina, consisted of itinerant bushworkers, who were not parochial, were much more radical, and who embodied a broad-based social class identity, the interests of geographically less concentrated, unskilled workers, and a recognition of the inter-relationship between town and country. The third type of union, the miners, which Savage now joined at North Prentice, boasted a very strong occupational identity and a life-long solidarity that reflected and grew out of their unique working environment and the tight-knit, homogeneous local communities in which they were concentrated.

But in the years after 1900 the AMA at Rutherglen was very much on the defensive—short of money, its membership declining, its stewards banned from many mines including North Prentice, its leaders victimised, and its unity and morale shattered by successive defeats. The mine-owners, faced with escalating costs and with minimal profits, if not actual losses, were intransigent. As far as the employers, who 'wanted to be free to employ whom they liked',[15] were concerned, men who could not do a proper day's work had to be laid off and wages for the remainder lowered. Some even suggested that it might be a good idea if all the mines just pumped water for three months and stopped all other work to show the men what would happen if the union did not agree to the owners' conditions and rates of pay.[16]

The Rutherglen miners resisted the further erosion of their already shocking standard of living but were beaten in a series of strikes and lockouts. At the end of 1900, for example, the local unionists voted 323 to 0 in favour of a strike against the hour's unpaid travelling time

underground at the very wet and depressed Chiltern Valley Number 2 mine, where a shareholder at a six-monthly shareholders' meeting noted that 'wages . . . were the same now as they were 34 years ago'.[17] The miners also decided to refuse to work in future alongside non-unionists. Although supported initially by the Victorian State Executive of the AMA, the strike was broken when the union's executive at Bendigo reversed its stand, wrote to the mine directors thanking them for their courtesy, cut off financial support to the strikers, and ordered them to return to work unconditionally. Led by Tom Howes, one of Savage's friends, the local branch voted 219–133 to continue the strike without state-wide support, but within weeks the dispute was over. Prominent strikers were refused re-employment and the failure of the state AMA to back the local miners led to a sharp drop in AMA membership at Rutherglen.[18] The local union suffered two further humiliating defeats at the McEvoy Eldorado and Great Southern Consolidated mines in 1902. Many Rutherglen miners resigned from the AMA in protest at its refusal to support the local branch, and nowhere was the reaction more hostile than at the North Prentice mine.[19] By 1903 only about 300 of the 1100 men employed in the Rutherglen mines belonged to the AMA and a mere dozen were prepared to attend meetings.[20] The following year the AMA at the state level suffered a disastrous defeat when a seventy-two-week strike in the coal mines further south ended with blacklisted union leaders such as Bob Semple being forced to migrate to New Zealand.

Michael Savage detested the years he spent underground at North Prentice and decided that he would rather be on the surface pumping out water than down the mine working in it. Even after the drainage work had been completed at North Prentice, the mine was still a very damp and unhealthy place.[21] Savage felt insecure in his job. There was constant threat of death and injury and a steady increase in the pressure of water. The failure to produce worthwhile quantities of gold until 1905 also kept alive the possibility that the North Prentice mine would be closed down permanently. From the time he had become a self-taught mechanic on the 'tumbling tommies' and water pumps at North Yanco, Savage had been interested in engines and machinery. At the end of 1904 he left his job as a miner and began studying for a certificate as a mining and factory engineer. An engine-driver was a highly regarded 'somebody' in a rural or mining community at that time and enjoyed better pay and conditions than many other workers. At the pitheads, stationary-engine drivers wound cages loaded with men hundreds of feet up and down the shafts. They also operated the pumps, an extremely responsible job requiring a great deal of skill. The steam engines, fired by vast quantities of wood, did not have governors and the operators were required to judge when to increase or let off steam. Only capable and reliable men were permitted to operate the pumps because if the engines and pumps stopped, the miners working far below were in danger of being swamped by millions of gallons

of water.

At the end of 1905, following examinations at Wangaratta, mining engineers' certificates were awarded to seventeen men from the Wangaratta-Rutherglen district. Three of the seventeen received first-class certificates, the others issued being second- or third-class. Only one of the three first-class certificates was awarded without qualification or condition—to M. J. Savage.[22] Savage immediately joined the Amalgamated Engine-drivers' Association and obtained an engine-driver's job at 8*s*. 4*d*. a day at a mine partly owned by Dr (later Sir) John Harris, a well-known Rutherglen medical practitioner, viticulturalist, and mine-owner, who was later to become a leader of the Country Party and Minister of Health in the Victorian State Parliament.[23] Savage's fortunes appeared to be changing for the better; but within a few months he was again unemployed.

Always a determined and, on matters of principle, an uncompromising man, Savage took his responsibilities as an engine driver very seriously. Finding that the wire ropes on the winding-gear in the mine shafts were badly frayed and, in his opinion, unsafe, he advised his employers that men's lives were in danger each time miners were lowered down or lifted up the deep shaft. The owners were reluctant to spend more money on what was becoming an unprofitable mine. Finally, in March 1906, Savage refused to operate the winding-gear until the ropes were renewed. He was sacked and blacklisted by the employers. Savage later observed, 'I could not be responsible for what would have happened, and as I had warned the manager again and again I could do nothing else.'[24] The dispute stopped work at the Southern and Prentice shaft. The mine flooded and the *Sun* predicted that, as a result, 'the water will soon make itself felt at the North Prentice working and . . . it will be impossible to get the wash out with profit'.[25] Over the next few years all the mines flooded as work ceased upstream and mines further down found that they could not manage to pump out the increasing pressure of water.

At North Prentice Michael had been reunited with his father and two of his three surviving brothers. Richard, the oldest brother, was farming at Tumbarumba in New South Wales. His wife, Susan, had died shortly after their marriage, leaving Richard a widower with an infant son. He never remarried. Susan's sister, Roberta Asquith, had married William Savage, with whom Michael boarded from 1900 until 1907. Roberta and William had eight children, all of whom survived infancy and all of whom were brought up devout Catholics by their parents, who said the family rosary in their home every night. A short distance away, Michael's father lived in retirement with the family of the third surviving brother, Rowland, who owned the Endeavour and later the Empire Hotels at Wahgunyah, a small town on the southern bank of the Murray River. Rowland and his wife had lost their only two sons a few years before, Joseph dying from convulsions and Arthur from a bowel infection, incorrectly diagnosed and treated by a doctor from Corowa across the

river. Their three attractive and redoubtable daughters, Eileen, May and Doris, survived infancy.

Michael's father, Richard Savage senior, had sold his farm at Rothesay in 1898 when he was sixty-eight. Out of the proceeds Richard gave his son Rowland £200 on the understanding that he would live with and be supported by Rowland and his family for the rest of his life. The balance of the money derived from the sale of the farm Richard banked for his everyday needs. He was to live with Rowland for ten years; until 1902 at Wahgunyah, then for just over a year at Prahran in Melbourne, and for the last five years until he died in September 1908 at the Farmers' Arms Hotel in Nurmurkah.[26] The balance of his estate on his death was £26. 18*s*. 10*d*., the net legacy of a lifetime's hard toil.[27] Richard Savage was described in his obituaries as a man of 'quiet unassuming disposition . . . held in high esteem for his gentlemanly qualities and kindly nature'.[28] It was also noted that he 'took a keen and intelligent interest in current affairs'[29] and he often discussed politics and economics with his youngest son, Michael, during the frequent holidays Richard senior spent with the Willie Savages at North Prentice or during the equally frequent visits Michael made to Wahgunyah.

One subject father and son discussed was the old-age pension system adopted in Victoria in 1900 and modelled directly on the New Zealand scheme of 1898. Until 1900 the care of the aged in Victoria had been an individual or family responsibility, supplemented as a last resort by private charities and benevolent asylums. Under the new scheme, in order to receive a pension at age sixty-five, applicants had to appear in person before a commissioner and under oath give a history of their life, a statement of their marital situation, a detailed summary of assets and income, and reasons why their family, if any, was unable to look after them in their old age. They also had to present references as to their respectability. Applications were heard in public and reported in detail in the local press. In February 1902, for example, thirty-two cases were heard at Rutherglen and fully reported in the *Sun*.[30] Typical was one woman who had lived in Victoria all her sixty-seven years, whose husband had been dead for twenty-five, and who had been crippled for fifteen years. She had one daughter, employed as a general servant but in ill-health and earning when well only 10*s*. a week. The mother had no income but owned a small cottage valued at £50 in which she and the daughter lived. A pension of 5*s*. was granted on condition that the cottage was immediately signed over to the Crown. Another application was from a sixty-eight year-old widower who lived in a shed on a miner's right, a small plot of ground valued at £20. He suffered badly from asthma and had been able to earn only about 3*s*. a week for some time. A police witness referred to two convictions for drunkenness and a pension was declined. The old man was offered instead a place in a benevolent asylum, which he in turn refused.

Perhaps from these discussions with his father and from reading such reports in the daily papers, Savage developed his deep and life-long resentment of and detestation for means-tested pensions and welfare benefits. In later years, as Prime Minister of New Zealand, he was to fight against even his own colleagues in the first Labour Cabinet for a pension system that people received as of right and not from charity, or after the applicant had been pauperised, or according to a subjective assessment of the supposed respectability of the recipient. Savage always believed that people's dignity was as important as their economic security, particularly in their old age or when they became invalided or unemployed.

Savage still enjoyed fishing and shooting along the banks of the Murray River and watching horses race at miners' sports days. He continued to impress his new friends with robust displays of strength, and one of those friends, Paddy Webb, was later to recall that 'as a weight-lifter he was one of the best I have ever seen' and that Savage, with his 'deep chest and strong limbs', was also 'particularly good at feats of strength with his jaws and teeth'.[31] Savage also busied himself in the life of the community. Although he had no children of his own, he enjoyed their company as much as that of adults and became, as his father had been at Rothesay or his former employer Ball at Benalla, one of the mainstays of the local state school. With others, such as George and Rose Hunter, Savage fought for additional classroom accommodation and the drainage of the soggy, unhealthy grounds of the North Prentice school.[32] He became treasurer of the school's Arbour Day and picnic committees, helped raise money for a sewing machine and other articles for the school, and organised and ran the races at the 1904 and 1905 sports days.[33] He insisted that every one of the 200 children receive a toy. Those who did not come first, second or third in a race received their gift out of a lucky dip. Michael Savage's sister-in-law Roberta was responsible for decorating the schoolroom and preparing the food for the children's parties and picnics.

There was no hall or communal meeting place at North Prentice when Savage arrived there in 1900. He became the secretary of a small committee of four people who raised the funds and built the North Prentice Federal Hall.[34] When the hall was opened in November 1904, Savage was the master of ceremonies for the inaugural concert and dance that followed, a position he occupied subsequently at the very popular fortnightly dances and periodic balls and concerts that the committee organised in the hall and at which one of Savage's young nephews sometimes gave a violin 'overture'.[35] At the 1905 ball, for example, at which Roberta Savage as the Queen of Hearts won the prize for the most original female costume, the *Sun* reported that 'Mr M. Savage, the genial secretary, had everything in complete readiness, and to his efforts in this direction the success of the affair is largely due'.[36]

Being unmarried, Savage had the time and the motivation to become

involved in community activities, which gave him companionship and an intrinsic satisfaction from meeting and working with other people on common causes. At North Prentice and Rutherglen he made many friends, two of whom, Webb and Hunter, were to be associated with him for the rest of his life. To these men, co-operation and mutual loyalty were the paramount virtues. Their mateship was not homosexual in any physical sense but it certainly involved a warm regard for one another that resembled the love ideally found among members of the same sex within a family. They cared about one another, enjoyed each other's company, and shared common backgrounds and experiences, disappointments and frustrations, dreams and aspirations.

Savage's closest friends at North Prentice and Rutherglen were very interesting people. Alf Sullivan, seventeen years older than Savage, had been a shearer in Australia and New Zealand and a foundation member of the Shearers' Union at Wagga Wagga before becoming a miner. A well-known lecturer on the novels of Charles Dickens, Sullivan was president of the local branches of the miners' union, the Australian Natives' Association and the Political Labor League. Two of Savage's other friends also held office in the local Australian Natives' Association: the vice-president, John Geoghegan, who was the proprietor of the Shamrock Hotel where the miners' union held its meetings, treasurer for the union, and first treasurer of the Rutherglen PLL; and the ANA auditor, Tom Drenen, who was the proprietor-editor of the *Sun*, mayor of Rutherglen, director of a mining company, Justice of the Peace, secretary of the racing club, and described by the miners' president as a man who always supported the union.[37] Nearly all Savage's other friends were miners who became active in the formation locally of the PLL: Tom Howes, the Chiltern AMA president, a reluctant militant during the industrial disputes because he believed that 'no man suffers more than the miner from the effects of a strike';[38] George Mead, the secretary of the Chiltern AMA branch; Alf Plant, who married one of Paddy Webb's three sisters; and George Hunter, George Ward, Matthew McMahon and Jim McInnerny.

A family with whom Michael Savage became very friendly at North Prentice was the Webb family. For many years the family had owned a vineyard near Rutherglen, but by 1900 they had lost it. All five sons, Frank, George, Alf, Bill (Buck) and Paddy, were working in the North Prentice mine. Their misfortune was compounded when their home at North Prentice was completely destroyed by fire.[39] Patrick Charles (Paddy) Webb was a charming, extroverted, happy-go-lucky teenager, twelve years younger than Savage. He was, like Savage, whom he came to admire and love as an older brother, a short, strong and energetic sportsman who excelled especially at cricket, where he was capable of claiming six wickets for six runs playing for the North Prentice team in the local competition.[40] Paddy had started work in his father's vineyard in 1899 at the age of fifteen, but from 1901 until 1905 he worked in the

Johanna Savage née Hayes, Michael Joseph Savage's mother. *Mrs E.M. Brown (née Savage)*

Savage's childhood home at Rothesay was almost identical to this 1861 slab-and-bark cottage at nearby Lima. *Mrs Judith Bassett, Upotipotpon*

Map showing the location of Benalla, Rutherglen and Narrandera, at or near which Savage spent the first thirty-five years of his life

This typical selection in north-eastern Victoria about 1875 was similar to that owned by Richard Savage. *Royal Historical Society of Victoria*

Savage's teacher Miss Sarah Ann Brown (sitting) and her sisters. *Mrs E.M. Brown and Mrs Mona Filopponi*

The Rothesay School, No. 1486, sketched by Miss Mary Brown, sister of Savage's teacher Miss Sarah Ann Brown. *Mrs E.M. Brown*

Four of Savage's brothers: Rowland, William, Richard and Hugh (left to right). *Mrs E.M. Brown*

Rose Savage at her wedding to Edward Cain in 1891. *Mrs E.M. Brown*

Savage's employer Tony Ball occupied the large store on the corner before moving into the smaller building next door, where the name 'A. Ball Wine and Spirit Merchant' can be seen on the windows. *Benalla and District Historical Society*

North Prentice mine, where Savage and others formed a book club and introduced him to Blatchford's *Merrie England*, George's *Progress and Poverty*, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, and Karl Marx's *Capital*.[41] Webb became so active in union and political Labour activities that he was eventually blacklisted, and at the age of twenty-one sailed for New Zealand in 1905.

The growth of the Labour Party in Victoria was somewhat more protracted than in New South Wales and Queensland. As in New Zealand, Victorian politics during the 1890s were dominated by a radical, humanitarian, Liberal government, which sought to break up the large estates, protect industry, and provide employment, pensions, and better wages and conditions for workers. As a result, although the ten Labour candidates elected to the Victorian Legislative Assembly in 1892 were the first in an Australian colony, through the nineties the Labour MLAs, who occupied a minority, third-party position, allied themselves with the Liberals. It was not until after federation and the need to organise Labour nationally for the 1901 Commonwealth elections that the Melbourne Trades Council convened a meeting of forty-one unions on 7 February 1901 to establish a more broadly based and independent Political Labor Council.[42] The support of the two major rural unions, the AWU and the AMA, was essential to the PLC's attempts to extend its organisation and influence outside Melbourne. But until 1909, despite the activity of many individual miners and frequent PLC delegations to AMA conferences, the AMA, unlike the AWU, provided little support.

Most of Labour's early active members saw their party as 'a great regenerative movement', a crusade to relieve men, women and children from those 'influences and practices that crush the soul, warp the mind and despoil the body'.[43] But serious conflicts of interest and personality soon emerged: between urban worker and depressed, small farmer; the pick and shovel brigade and the intellectuals; skilled and unskilled workers; religious and rationalist; Catholic and Protestant; prohibitionists and supporters of the liquor trade; militarists and pacifists; imperialists and Irish home-rulers; nationalists and internationalists; protectionists and free traders; sexual liberals and sexual conservatives; male chauvinists and female liberationists; ideologues and pragmatists; those who stressed individual conscience and those who advocated strict solidarity, especially among members of a parliamentary caucus; Marxists and non-Marxists; George's single-taxers and Bellamy's utopian socialists; parliamentarians and the extra-parliamentary organisation; Labourites wanting piecemeal reform and socialists wanting social revolution; native-born and immigrants; state and state. Since the formation of the PLC in Victoria in 1901, there had been a growing intellectual influence within the party, which led to tension and eventually friction between the moderate, pragmatic, Trades Hall unionists and a socialist wing that included a number of journalists, professionals and small businessmen. Their

theoretical debates were reflected in the pages of the PLC's official, and relatively moderate, journal, *Tocsin*, whose name meant 'warning bell', whose motto was, somewhat ironically, 'the unity of labour is the hope of the world', and whose columns incidentally carried many items of news about New Zealand.[44]

The PLC at the local level, seeking to expand, educate, enthuse and activate the party's membership and the far more numerous Labour voters and potential voters, became almost like a secular church rather than a political party. Adherents were expected to give freely of their time, talents and money. The party functioned as an embracing social unit, with regular private meetings of the party faithful for fellowship, entertainment and self-education. Evangelical public meetings, addressed by the party's most articulate and persuasive orators, were held to share the gospel and win converts. As with a church or union, to either or both of which most PLC activists concurrently belonged, the Labour Party gave its members a sense of identity, a serious purpose and an intrinsic satisfaction. As in a fundamentalist religious sect, the party also preached a dogmatic, millennialist doctrine in which good and evil were clearly distinguished, love for one's fellow was the highest ideal, and self-centred, individual greed the greatest sin. But the poor and downtrodden were not to find compensation for their earthly poverty and suffering in some supernatural 'pie in the sky by and by'; the new Jerusalem, a caring society of love, peace, justice and plenty, had to be built by human drive and effort in Australia, and indeed internationally. The Victorian PLC had no greater prophet for proclaiming this message and converting men and women to socialism than Tom Mann, who arrived in Melbourne in September 1902 after lecturing on socialism and unionism for eight months in New Zealand.

Mann was a compelling orator, an inspirational educator and a talented organiser, who was described by one friend and colleague as distinguished by his 'vitality of mind . . . virility of body . . . ruthless energy'[45] and by a biographer as 'an initiator, a catalyst, a goad to action'.[46] During a long life Mann held many prominent positions and was associated with many landmark events in the history of the British Labour movement. He was one of the leaders of the famous 1889 London dock strike, the first full-time secretary of the Independent Labour Party, the first general secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, and a foundation member of the British Communist Party. As one of the foremost apostles of the new industrial unionism, Mann's objective was always the abolition of poverty through socialist activity concurrently in every sphere of life—through trade union organisation, politics, and the formation of co-operative societies in farming, industry and retailing. The relationship between religion and socialism fascinated Mann, who had been an evangelical, fundamentalist Christian during his teenage years, and permeated his speeches and writings.

Within a month of arriving in Melbourne, Mann found himself as the PLC's organiser for the October 1902 state elections. The election results were a disaster for Labour. The Conservatives won sixty-six out of ninety-five seats in the Legislative Assembly and Labour a mere twelve, only one of which was outside Melbourne. The depressed rural towns and the drought-stricken countryside were swept by a conservative reaction fanned by the Citizens' National Reform League, known popularly as the Kyabram movement after the small town in northern Victoria where it started.[47] The election results made it obvious that the PLC needed to increase its support in the countryside, not only to win more state seats and to combat the Kyabram movement but also to help Labour candidates for the federal senate, which was elected on a state-wide basis. From March 1903, as the PLC's organiser, Mann travelled widely throughout Victoria, seeking to establish the Labour cause, especially in mining towns, transport centres and shearers' camps. In 1903 alone he held over 200 meetings and estimated that he spoke to over 90 000 people.[48] By the end of 1903, eighty-two new branches had been added to the ten formed before that year. Seventy-two of the new branches were in country areas and at least fifty-three were initiated personally by Mann. Many of those country branches were small and vulnerable because rural workers were afraid of losing their jobs if they joined. But the PLC, as a result of Mann's efforts, now had a state-wide, albeit still skeletal, presence and, when the federal elections were held on 16 December 1903, Labour's share of the senate vote in Victoria surged to 25.98 per cent from 12.82 in 1901.[49]

Mann's meetings followed a set pattern. He used music and singing to attract and enthuse his audience. Then, in his 'strong metallic voice' and 'terse direct style',[50] he spoke sternly, simply and earnestly, without rancour or excessive emotion. He did not at first stress class warfare but portrayed Labour as a moderate, reformist movement, the manifestation of true, practical Christianity, working responsibly towards social justice through legislative means rather than through the suffering inherent in strikes. Although he blamed poverty, injustice and social distress, first on the private ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and, secondly on the spirit of competition instead of co-operation, Mann went on to argue that socialism 'was not equality, which meant that one should have as much as another. Equality of opportunity was what they demanded'.[51] At the end of each meeting, he asked those awakened by his address and willing to work for socialism by forming a local branch of the PLC to remain behind. The rules of the PLC were explained, names of those present were taken, an interim secretary was appointed, and a date was fixed for the first formal meeting of the new Labour branch.

In August 1903 Mann spoke to a large gathering in the Rutherglen Town Hall. After the meeting those willing to form a branch of the PLC at Rutherglen were invited to stay behind.[52] The following week the

inaugural meeting of the branch was held at Geoghegan's Shamrock Hotel. Mann returned for further meetings at Rutherglen in February and December 1904,[53] noting especially the difference between an anarchist, who rejected political action, and a socialist, who 'believes in the wisdom of parliament to bring about a collective action for a collective good of a common people'.[54] Among those inspired by Mann and who stayed behind to join the PLC after his Rutherglen meetings were Savage and Webb. After the December 1904 meeting a separate North Prentice branch of the PLC, with forty-five members, was formed. Plant was president, his young brother-in-law, Paddy Webb, was the inaugural secretary, and Savage was on the committee,[55] replacing Webb as secretary at the end of 1905. The new branch was very active, organising concerts, dances, public meetings with visiting speakers, and a thirty-strong Labour choir, which performed at the political meetings. It carried on a regular correspondence with the PLC Central Executive and decided to send a delegate, Savage, to the annual conference in Melbourne.[56] The North Prentice branch, almost half of whose members were female, took a particular interest in women and politics, distributing literature in favour of women's suffrage, encouraging women to attend political rallies, and holding meetings addressed by prominent Labour women such as Miss Lilian Locke and Miss H. F. Powell. Harriet Powell, twenty-eight, a PLC organiser, visited the Rutherglen district several times in 1906 and 1907 and on each occasion was escorted by Savage round all the mines. She spoke particularly on 'The Emancipation of Women', arguing that women should receive not just the vote but full equality with men, who down through history had denigrated women as 'beasts of burden', 'the servant of man', as 'toys', as 'inferiors', and as 'the temptress of man, and odious in the sight of God'.[57] Frequent sermons by the Rev. T. H. James, of the North Prentice Congregational Church, on 'Christian Socialism', 'The Ideal Socialism', and 'Christ the Greatest Socialist' also helped keep socialism a live topic among the North Prentice miners.[58]

Most Australian socialists saw the state and the trade union movement as the major instruments of social progress, but a few, including Savage, also developed an interest in both producer and consumer co-operatives. They were impressed especially by the success of the consumer co-operative established in Britain in 1844 by twenty-eight Rochdale miners, which by 1901 had an annual turnover in excess of £81,000,000 and a profit returned to its consumer-shareholders of £9,000,000.[59] Since the formation of a co-operative society and store in Adelaide in 1868, there had been a number of attempts to establish co-operatives in Australia, sometimes successfully, as at Bendigo in 1891 and Ballarat in 1896, and sometimes unsuccessfully, as at Narrandera during Savage's seven years at North Yanco. In 1903 and 1904 anonymous letters appeared in the Rutherglen *Sun* asking why the price of a four-pound loaf of bread in Rutherglen was 8*d*, 2*d*. dearer than in most other places, and suggesting

the formation of a co-operative bakery.[60]

Following an address on co-operatives by a visiting Labour senator, three meetings were held in the Rutherglen Temperance Hall in May 1906 to discuss the establishment of a co-operative society.[61] At the second meeting Savage moved that a constitution for a Rutherglen Co-operative Distribution Society based on the Bendigo society be drawn up. A committee of five was then elected from eleven nominees, Savage apparently topping the poll. Shares in the society were to be £1, with 5*s*. paid on application and the remainder in six, fortnightly instalments. No member was to have more than five shares. Canvassers were appointed to visit houses and sell shares, Savage accepting responsibility for North Prentice. A bakery was to be the first priority. Shareholders would receive bonuses, consumers lower prices for bread, and some of the profits would be used to send children of members to university.

The enthusiasm of most members soon waned, however, and within weeks Savage, who had become the society's organising secretary, was working almost single handed to make the project a reality. He organised a number of public meetings, addressed by visiting speakers and entertained by the PLC choir singing Labour songs, in an effort to publicise the co-operative.[62] By spending his nights door-knocking and returning to some houses several times, Savage personally enrolled many more members, though in July 1906 he reported somewhat sadly that 'during the past month he had canvassed the greater part of the district, and had not met with the success that he had expected'.[63] Although he was reluctant to continue organising the co-operative on his own and suggested that someone else be appointed as a paid subscription canvasser, Savage agreed, because of his enthusiasm for the venture and his experience in shop management, to become secretary-manager of the society until it was firmly established. It was generally accepted that the calibre of the person appointed manager would be crucial to the store's future, and the ideal co-operative manager was described as 'one who knows the district, and knows the requirements of the district; but on all accounts he must be a good businessman, sober, honest, and industrious; and one if possible who has had previous experience in co-operative matters . . . the success or otherwise depends solely on the manager'.[64]

Although concerned about the society's limited capital, Savage, on behalf of the co-operative, bought a section, called tenders and supervised the erection of a shop, purchased an oven and three delivery carts, and arranged for supplies of flour despite opposition from local millers and bakers.[65] The society's membership rose to 386 shareholders with 436 shares.[66] Finally, Savage employed a baker, J. Little, and commenced baking in January 1907, making a profit of £71 over the initial six weeks of trading.[67] At first, however, Savage had to admit that, 'our bread was not first-class, but . . . in a new concern, like ours, the shareholders, individually and collectively, must be prepared to put up with, for a time

at least, some inconveniences and annoyances'.[68] By June the quality of the bread had improved and the co-operative bakery was serving 296 customers daily with bread at 5*d*. a loaf, 3*d*. less than the price of bread in Rutherglen when the society was first suggested and still a penny cheaper than bread currently available from private bakeries. The society's shop also was selling 490 dozen cakes and buns weekly and Savage suggested that, with a little more capital, the business could possibly be extended to sell groceries, footwear and other items.[69]

Although very busy with the affairs of the co-operative during 1906 and 1907, Savage was equally involved in the activities of the Political Labor Council, having taken over from Webb as secretary of the North Prentice branch at the end of 1905, then becoming secretary of the district committee of the PLC, and being very prominent in Labour's campaigns for the federal seat of the Indi in 1906 and for the state seat of Wangaratta and Rutherglen in 1907.

The Indi electorate, in which mining and farming were the major occupations, covered much of the north-east region of Victoria south of the Murray River, including the towns of Rutherglen, Benalla, Wangaratta and Beechworth. It had been represented since federation by Isaac Isaacs, the Liberal-Protectionist politician who had demonstrated a genuine and practical sympathy for many of Labour's aspirations and policies and, indeed, in 1903 had published a joint electoral platform with the Labour Party.[70]. At the 1901 election the miners at North Prentice had revealed no anti-Semitism in giving Isaacs 61 of the 70 votes recorded there, and he did almost as well at Rutherglen, where he received three-quarters of the vote.[71] In 1903 Isaacs was re-elected unopposed but, although appointed Australia's Attorney General in the Deakin Ministry of 1905, he decided to retire from politics and accept appointment to the High Court shortly before the December 1906 election. His decision threw the contest for the seat of Indi, in which Isaacs had been regarded as unbeatable, wide open.

At the beginning of 1906 only Savage's North Prentice branch of the PLC appeared to be active in the electorate. However, after an address by Savage on 'Labour Politics' to a Saturday night meeting of about 300 people in Rutherglen, the Rutherglen branch was reformed in May 1906.[72] In September the recessed branch at Wangaratta, a major railway centre with large sheds and workshops and reputed to be the most prosperous town in the north-east at that time, was reopened.[73] In October a new branch was formed at Talgarno in the Beechworth district.[74] During this time Savage, as secretary of the Indi District Council and the North Prentice branch, was very active organising and speaking at public meetings.

When nominations for the PLC candidate for Indi were invited in October 1906, the branches nominated a strong field of five men: Savage, Sullivan, J.M. Wrout of Melbourne, John Thomas, a prosperous

Wangaratta draper, and Daniel Turnbull, a Talgarno farmer.[75] A selection meeting was held at Wangaratta on Saturday 27 October. Ballot papers had been distributed to all members of the PLC living in the electorate and postal voting was permissible. When the votes were counted at the meeting, none of the five nominees had a majority, but the choice was clearly between Savage and Turnbull. Those two then each addressed the meeting for twenty minutes, Turnbull stressing that he believed in and would uphold, if selected, the principle of a white Australia and advocate it at all his meetings, a promise he was later to keep. Unfortunately, what Savage said went unreported. The two men were a clear contrast. Turnbull, a much older and wealthier man than Savage, had lived in the Beechworth district, the largest polling centre in the electorate, for forty years. Originally a miner from Northumberland, he had become a successful farmer, was currently chairman of the local mining board, of which he had been a member since 1888, and was also a longtime councillor and president of the Beechworth Shire. Just before midnight the scrutineers announced that Turnbull had been selected as the candidate, beating Savage by one vote.[76]

Savage worked as hard for Turnbull as he would have worked for himself. He canvassed door to door, registered voters, distributed propaganda, organised meetings for visiting Labour speakers, usually moving the vote of thanks at the end of their addresses,[77] and escorted Miss Powell through the district.[78] When Turnbull failed to appear to speak as advertised at Wahgunyah, Savage spoke on his behalf from the upstairs verandah of the Empire Hotel.[79] Savage also found time to attend the Rutherglen meeting of Joseph Tilly Brown, the Wangaratta auctioneer and stock agent who was chosen from three anti-Labour nominees to represent the Conservative cause.[80] At that meeting Savage questioned Brown repeatedly on federal expenditure and Victoria's indebtedness.[81]

The PLC's policy objectives at the 1906 election were simple, general and humanitarian. The major problem was identified as unemployment, Labour declaring, 'that men, women and children should want, while land is untilled, machinery idle, and willing hands unable to find employment, is a disgrace to our Government'.[82] The answer lay in the creation of a mixed economy with monopoly industries owned and controlled by the state while the majority of smaller industries were carried on by private enterprise. The rights of individuals had to be protected and fostered but without anyone deriving undue benefits from either state assistance or the unbridled survival of the fittest. Above all else, the PLC argued, society 'owes every child nourishment and fitting education'.[83]

Hopes were high for a PLC victory in Indi but the election results on 12 December 1906 were disappointing for Labour. Brown polled 6802 votes, Turnbull 5986, and a third candidate, Thomas Patrick McInerney an anti-Labour Melbourne lawyer, 2545. Only half the electors on the

roll voted and Turnbull, although polling well at Beechworth, failed to appeal sufficiently to the miners at Rutherglen, where he received only half the vote, or the railwaymen at Wangaratta, where he received about a quarter. It was widely held that 'This seat would certainly have been won by a good Labour man; but Turnbull's candidacy was a farce. He was not very impressive as a speaker. Indeed he was the weakest man in the Victorian campaign.'[84] That there was some truth in that observation was shown when Labour did win the Indi seat at the 1910 election.

Savage and his colleagues immediately turned their attention to the state assembly electorate of Wangaratta and Rutherglen, which had been held easily over recent elections by the onetime liberal, but by then conservative, journalist and anti-women's suffrage candidate, John Bowser of Wangaratta.[85] In 1900, 1902 and 1904 Bowser had comfortable majorities over the supposedly liberal Rutherglen Shire secretary, Allen Buckley, who in 1899 had divorced his wife and mother of his eight children for refusing to have any more.[86] At the 1904 election the PLC had nominated in preference to Sullivan the other nominee, a dairy factory manager and onetime farmer, James Redding, who admitted that he knew little about mining.[87] However, after campaigning for the seat, Redding unexpectedly and 'to the disappointment of his committee' had withdrawn just before polling day.[88]

Determined to organise early and thoroughly for the state elections expected in June 1907, Savage's North Prentice branch contacted all other branches of the PLC in the Wangaratta electorate and proposed that members be asked to contribute 1*s*. a week to a fighting fund, that an election committee with two delegates from each branch be established, and that nominations for a candidate be called immediately.[89] Four nominations were received, including the names of Savage and George Morrow, a labourer and president of the Wangaratta branch. It was decided that the four should address all branches prior to a ballot of all members resident in the electorate during the week 16–23 February, the votes to be counted and the candidate announced at a meeting at Wangaratta on Saturday 23 February.[90] The *Sun* commented that Savage's selection was 'looked on as certain'[91] and the more conservative *Miner* also said that it was taken for granted that he would be the Labour candidate.[92] Although the Wangaratta branch supported its president, Savage won the nomination. The *Miner*, which was a staunch supporter of the incumbent, Bowser, noted that

> Mr M. J. Savage (manager of the Co-operative Distribution Society) has been selected by the Political Labor Leagues throughout the electorate to contest the constituency in the interests of Labour. It will be remembered that Mr Savage narrowly missed being selected for Indi, the ballot going against him by one vote. He is well versed in Labour matters, and should be solidly supported by members of the league.[93]

During the same week that Savage was selected as candidate, however, the Conservative Premier of Victoria, Thomas Bent, stunned everyone by announcing that the state elections would be advanced from June to Friday 15 March 1907 and that nominations would close in a fortnight. The opposition parties, including the PLC, were taken by surprise. Eighteen government supporters were returned unopposed, many voters could not be registered in time, and Savage had a week in which to find his candidate's deposit of £25, and only another fortnight in which to fight the campaign and find sufficient funds to meet campaign expenses. The PLC branches in the Wangaratta and Rutherglen electorate had no funds left after fighting the federal elections immediately prior to Christmas and were only just recommencing their activities in the New Year. Indeed, the PLC's Central Executive in Melbourne had recently paid £10 of the Indi electorate's outstanding debts.[94] Savage, who over the previous twelve months had been at first unemployed and then working for a minimal wage while establishing the co-operative, had no money of his own to pay the deposit, hire the halls, finance advertisements and handbills, and meet his travelling costs. The Wangaratta members on the PLC's District Council—Morrow, whom Savage had defeated for the nomination, and Thomas, the draper who had failed to secure the PLC nomination for Indi some months previously—made it plain that the candidate could expect little if any financial assistance and, as a result, the council's members resolved that 'owing to the short time available before the elections they could not reasonably hope for success, and therefore Mr Savage's candidature will not be proceeded with'.[95] Savage very reluctantly accepted the majority decision and announced publicly his withdrawal from the contest.

Immediately, the Wangaratta branch wrote to the PLC's Central Executive in Melbourne notifying it of Savage's selection and subsequent withdrawal because 'he was unable to find deposit', and that 'Mr Thomas was then asked by the Branch to stand, without reference to the other branches concerned'.[96] After communicating with Savage, who explained the situation, the central executive endorsed Thomas, who had already announced himself as an independent Liberal-Labour candidate.[97] Although Savage spoke in Labour's interests at an open-air PLC concert at the Great Southern mine, chaired a crowded meeting for Thomas at North Prentice, and worked for Thomas's election, he was undoubtedly bitterly disappointed by the situation. Within the space of six months, Savage had lost the candidacy for Indi by one vote and, having then won the Wangaratta-Rutherglen nomination, had been asked to stand down because neither he nor the organisation had any money. He had then seen the emergence of a Labour candidate whom he had beaten in the first selection and who had not even contested the second but who could afford to pay his own expenses. Thomas lost by 1399 votes to 915, losing his hometown of Wangaratta 198–219 but winning at North Prentice

76–29 and Rutherglen 182–160. The PLC Central Executive, reporting specifically on Savage's withdrawal, noted that 'correspondence from several branches showed that the only thing that prevented Labour candidates, with splendid chances of success, from contesting some country seats was the want of sufficient funds'.[98]

In 1906 and 1907 Savage represented the Wangaratta electorate at the PLC's second and third annual conferences, both held in April in the Melbourne Trades Hall. In a postal ballot for delegates in 1906 Savage received 86 votes to a total of 36 for two other nominees.[99] He was joined by a second Wangaratta delegate, D. Keneally, who claimed that two-thirds of his branch's membership were farmers.[100]

Savage took part in at least three debates at the 1906 conference. Speaking to a motion that all areas of land exceeding 300 acres should be resurveyed because many boundaries had been incorrectly drawn up, Savage unsuccessfully opposed the limit, asking whether a farmer who legally owned 250 acres but because of faulty surveying held 299 was 'to be left in undisputed possession'.[101]

In his second contribution, Savage supported a central executive proposal that, in electorates with less than 301 members, sitting Labour parliamentarians seeking re-election would be considered approved unless the central executive authorised a selection ballot. The proposal was an attempt to prevent, for example, sixteen people in a branch of thirty ousting a Labour representative or even a party leader in an unexpectedly packed ballot. The motion was denounced as undemocratic by its opponents, but Savage replied that 'there were 17 Democrats on the Executive, and it was fair to suppose they would act fairly with democrats outside. The power should be given to them.'[102] Most delegates disagreed and the motion was lost.

Although he was in the minority on the first two issues, Savage was with the majority on the third, a motion that no member of the PLC should belong to another political party. The prohibition was aimed not only at those with Liberal-Labour sympathies but also at a militant socialist minority within the PLC. The conference minutes reported that, during a lengthy debate, 'Savage held that on broad principles the motion should be adopted. The progressive party must present a united front. It was better that people should go out of the party than that they should cause a split in the ranks.'[103]

This resolution and the debate preceding it reflected the growing disunity within the PLC. In June 1905 Mann, who had resigned as PLC organiser earlier in the year, commenced Sunday afternoon and evening lectures on socialism in Melbourne's Gaiety Theatre and Queen's Hall. He also established a Social Questions Committee, which grew quickly in numbers and influence. The committee changed its name in March 1906 to the Victorian Socialist Party. Most of the 800 members of the SQC-VSP at that time also belonged to the PLC, which they tried to

move in a more militantly and definitely socialist direction.

By 1907 Mann and other VSP leaders, such as J. P. Jones, a wealthy Melbourne businessman, John Curtin, later Australia's Prime Minister, Bob Ross, a journalist, and Harry Scott Bennett, Labour MLA for Ballarat West 1904–7, were stressing class warfare in opposition to Labour's generally reformist stance. Particularly prominent in this campaign was Scott Bennett, regarded by Mann as the ablest of the Australian-born socialist lecturers. Scott Bennett had become impatient and disillusioned with parliamentary methods and had decided not to seek re-election for Ballarat West, which Labour lost at the 1907 election anyway. Scott Bennett was well read and had followed closely the ideas and the development of the Industrial Workers of the World, founded in the United States in 1905. The IWW, whose views by 1907 were well known in Australian radical circles, believed that unionists should be educated in socialism, organised by industry not craft, and use the strike weapon against employers. Mann still hoped that the Labour Party in Australia could be persuaded to follow a more orthodox socialist path. Many of his supporters did not share his optimism and Scott Bennett in particular began to attack the PLC and especially its parliamentary representatives as a capitalist party differing little from the Liberals or Conservatives.[104]

Tensions between the moderate and more radical socialist factions within the PLC erupted at the turbulent annual conference held in April 1907 in the Melbourne Trades Hall. Among the ninety delegates from forty-one electorates, thirty-five unions, and the federal and state parliamentary caucuses were Savage and Sullivan, who represented one of only ten electorates allowed more than one delegate. The executive's report concentrated on the 1906 federal and 1907 state elections, and the organisational and financial weaknesses that had contributed to only four out of eighteen PLC candidates being successful in 1906 and only fourteen out of thirty-four in 1907. A motion to enter an electoral alliance with the Liberals was defeated 72 votes to 2 and moves to change the name of the PLC to the Victorian Labour Party or the Political Labor League were also lost.

The executive then moved that, because members of the parliamentary party were bound by the existing platform until the next election, all proposals relating to the platform, objective or pledge of the PLC should be removed from the conference agenda and that delegates should restrict their discussion to organisation and finance.[105] The opposition to the executive's recommendation was led by Scott Bennett, who wanted to discuss the adoption of a socialist objective, and Savage, who tersely observed that 'Organisation was most important, but it was necessary to put something good before those who were to be organised.'[106] The executive's proposal was rejected 30–49, with *Labor Call* commenting that 'The majority comprised the Socialists and most of the country delegates.'[107]

Savage then took part in several other debates. He favoured the raising of the exemption from the land tax to twice the existing amount; supported the establishment of individual electorate committees instead of larger district councils as intermediaries between the central executive and branches (defeated 31–33); and moved an unsuccessful amendment to prohibit membership of the PLC except through a branch or affiliated union.

The major clash was delayed until the final debate of the conference, when it was proposed 'That the State and Federal Platform be altered to provide for the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange.'[108] The PLC Central Executive's attitude was revealed clearly in a *Labor Call* editorial, which said that 'An irresponsible minority invited the Conference to "declare the party socialistic". . . . The conference was asked to declare for a policy of nationalisation. . . . by substituting for the present objective a jingle about the socialisation (or nationalisation) of the means of production, distribution and exchange'.[109] Twenty-two delegates spoke during the debate, twelve in favour of the socialist objective and ten against. The ninth speaker, and fourth in favour, was Savage. *Labor Call* reported: 'Mr Savage wanted Socialism, and the present objective was not Socialism. Even anti-Socialists could now join branches and sign the pledge.'[110] But when Scott Bennett, who did not speak during the debate, called for a division after the motion was declared lost on the voices, Savage found himself in a minority of 29 in favour with 49, including all but one parliamentarian, against the social objective.

The vote was a blow to those like Mann and Savage who had tried to reconcile socialism with a broad-based Labour Party. Savage had argued at the 1906 conference for unity and for those who could not agree with or abide by majority decisions or who belonged to other political parties to leave the PLC rather than remain and perpetuate disunity within it. But he also wanted the PLC to be a socialist as well as a Labour party and was undoubtedly disappointed at the 1907 conference decision to reject a socialist objective. He may also have foreseen the almost inevitable sequel.

Within two months an interstate socialist conference was held in Melbourne to discuss the 'advisability of a united Australian Socialist Party taking independent action' and also 'organising the workers industrially upon similar lines to those of the Industrial Workers of the World'.[111] Among the twelve delegates were Mann, Scott Bennett and Ross from Victoria, and a stern, intelligent, dogmatic, Marxist journalist from Sydney, Harry Holland. Holland, who became general secretary of the Socialist Federation of Australasia, which emerged from the conference, was later to visit New Zealand as a lecturer at the invitation of the New Zealand Socialist Party, which had sent a letter to the 1907 conference requesting affiliation. He remained in New Zealand to succeed Ross as editor of the *Maoriland Worker* and subsequently to become, from 1918 until his death

in 1933, leader of the New Zealand Labour Party's parliamentary caucus.

The socialist conference declared that none of the members of the Socialist Federation should 'seek election as a candidate of either the Australian Labor Party or any other non-Socialist Party',[112] and a meeting of the Victorian Socialist Party decided to break completely with the PLC.[113] The growing division and bitterness between Labour and the socialists was exacerbated by the aggressive atheism of some socialist spokesmen, notably Ross and Scott Bennett, the latter in time becoming better known for his lectures against religion than for those he gave in favour of socialism. The socialists were also very critical of craft unionism, Labour's pragmatic parliamentarians, and Labour's policy of industrial conciliation and arbitration. Within a short time the VSP lost its influence on the PLC and degenerated into a body of well-meaning but ineffectual eccentrics, hard-line Marxists, paranoid cranks, and carping malcontents, many of whom eventually ended up as members of the IWW, the Australian Communist Party, or as small factions on the lunatic fringe of the Labour movement. Curtin and Jones defected back to the Labour Party and Mann, disappointed by the sterile sectarianism and vicious infighting within the VSP and the Socialist Federation of Australasia, sought respite by revisiting New Zealand again in 1908. At the end of 1909 Mann returned via South Africa to England. Scott Bennett and Ross moved to New Zealand in 1909 and 1910 respectively. By then Savage had also left Australia.

With the Rutherglen mines starting to close down quickly after 1906, there was an exodus from the district and by 1910 North Prentice had become a ghost-town. William and Roberta Savage and their children decided to go north and seek an irrigated farm in the Riverina. Alf Plant, Matthew McMahon, and Paddy Webb's brothers, among others, came to rest at the new state coal mines at Wonthaggi, east of Melbourne. Many others had already crossed the Tasman to New Zealand, which had always been portrayed prominently in the newspapers and journals read by Savage over the years as a country politically advanced, generously endowed by nature, industrially peaceful, economically prosperous and socially harmonious—at least in relation to Australia. One of Savage's former acquaintances had written extolling New Zealand's many virtues on a number of occasions, noting that 'at present there appears to be more Australians here than New Zealanders'.[114] Among those Australians was Paddy Webb, who, in his own words, 'was so impressed by what I saw here and by the benefits the workers derived from the industrial legislation, the better working conditions and the better wages, that I wrote constantly to Mick Savage appealing to him to come over as well. . . . he made up his mind that he was going to have a look at New Zealand as he felt he would like to see the place I eulogised so much.'[115]

On Friday 6 September 1907 about thirty of Savage's closest friends met at the Rutherglen Hotel to farewell him on his departure for New

Zealand, where 'he intends to settle'. Both local newspapers recorded the event and expressed their own sorrow at his decision to leave.[116] After toasts to the King and Savage, McMahon described Savage as 'a solid man in everything that he had been connected with' and a person who 'by his actions had always proved himself worthy of respect'. He concluded by suggesting prophetically that 'what was to be their loss would be New Zealand's gain. He felt sure Mr Savage would be an acquisition to the country he was going to'. McMahon presented Savage with a travelling bag and silver-mounted pipe from his Rutherglen friends. Ward echoed McMahon's sentiments, saying, 'They all respected Mick Savage, and he would be sadly missed at North Prentice.' His North Prentice friends gave Savage a travelling rug and toilet set. The third speaker was Drenen, mayor of Rutherglen and editor of the *Sun*, who praised 'Savage's good qualities—honesty, straightforwardness, manliness and sobriety—which went to make a gentleman', sentiments echoed by the editor of the rival newspaper, the *Miner*, who subsequently noted in an article that Savage 'was a general favorite with the miners, and admired by others for his straightforwardness and manly bearing'.

In reply Savage said that 'he had always endeavoured to steer a straight course and would continue to do so. . . . He knew what he had done had not pleased everyone, but he had always endeavoured to do his best and what was right.' He commended the Labour Party and the co-operative society to those who remained and believed that, in reducing the price of bread despite a large increase in the price of flour, he had made a contribution to the well-being of the people of the district.[117] Two-and-a-half hours were then spent with songs, recitations and discussion, with everyone 'wishing Mick good luck in "God's own country" '.

V
BEER BARRELS AND SOAP BOXES 1907–14

THE UNION STEAM SHIP COMPANY's vessel the S.S. *Manuka* berthed at Wellington on Labour Day, 9 October 1907. Savage was among those on board who had paid 75*s.* to make the four-day voyage from Sydney as a steerage passenger crammed into the bottom of the ship.[1] By then aged thirty-five, he was only one of many thousands of Australians who crossed the Tasman to New Zealand at the turn of the century, between the 1901 and 1906 censuses almost doubling the number of Australian-born residents in New Zealand.[2]

Savage had only 1*s.* in his pocket when he landed in New Zealand's capital city, a collection of wooden buildings perched precariously on the steep, wind-swept slopes of Wellington harbour at the southernmost extremity of the North Island. Within hours of arrival he had spent half his meagre financial resources on a shave[3] and, after seeing a poster, was sitting in a political meeting listening to the British Labour leader Ben Tillett. Savage was later to claim, perhaps a little loosely, that Tillett's voice was the first he heard in New Zealand.[4]

Paddy Webb wanted Savage to join Hunter and himself at the Denniston coal mine on the West Coast of the South Island, but Webb mentioned that it had been raining for almost six months on the Coast and Savage replied that he thought he would move north in search of sun and warmth as well as work. He borrowed £5 from Webb, which he repaid as soon as he obtained a job at George Seifert's flax mill at Tokomaru, south-west of Palmerston North.[5] Savage spent most of his six months there working not in the mill itself but in the swamp cutting flax.[6] As with all his previous jobs in Australia, the hours were long, the work hard, the conditions unpleasant and the pay minimal.

The second day after his arrival on the job, the workers made a

presentation to their cook, a man called Frank Faulkner, whom Savage, as he later recollected, didn't know 'from a bar of soap'.[7] Because someone had heard that Savage was a good speaker, he was called upon to make the presentation. He not only did so but entertained the gathering with an impromptu stepdance on the dinner-table.

Although Savage made a number of new friends at Tokomaru, he did not stay long in the Manawatu. By April 1908 the Ruahine mountains nearby were becoming mantled in snow. Water started to rise in the drains and emptied into the swamps, which were also increasingly enveloped by the morning fog. The flax mills closed for the winter. The flaxworkers temporarily swelled the local army of unemployed. Again in search of work and still following the sun, Savage moved further north to the gold-mining town of Waihi. There he heard that there was a possibility of a co-operative society and grocery store being established in Auckland and pressed on to investigate that prospect.[8]

The largest and, at that time, most northern of New Zealand's major cities, Auckland had a unique physical environment, quite different to anything Savage had experienced in Australia. Set on a narrow, hilly isthmus between two large harbours—the sparkling Waitemata in the Hauraki Gulf on the usually placid east coast and the moody Manukau on the often furiously lashed west coast—Auckland enjoyed numerous beautiful beaches and off-shore islands, an attractive interpenetration of sea and land rivalled by few other cities anywhere in the world. Extinct volcanic cones dotted the isthmus, lofty ranges covered in native bush rose in the north-west, lush farmland stretched southward, and spacious gardens and green open spaces separated the distinct concentrations of housing. The climate was temperate, at times indeed almost subtropical. Although founded only seventy years before and, compared even to Melbourne or Sydney, at that time socially and culturally a colonial backwater, Auckland had already established itself as New Zealand's major centre of industry, commerce and trade. It was to be Savage's home town for the last half of his life.

During his visit to Waihi, Savage had been given a letter of introduction by a Mrs Walter Greening, who suggested that, until he obtained permanent board in Auckland, Savage should stay with her friends Alf and Elizabeth French at their rented home in Ponsonby, near the centre of Auckland.[9] When Savage arrived outside the French's house, he found Mrs Greening's god-daughter, Aruba French, then about two years old, caught by her dress on the picket fence. Savage freed Aruba and took her inside. Until his death thirty-two years later, Savage and the French family lived together: from 1908–16 at 63 O'Neill Street; from 1916–23 at 4 Paget Street; from 1923–27 at 9 Wanganui Avenue; and from 1927 until they moved to Wellington in 1936 at 9 Salisbury Street, Herne Bay. This last house, which Savage bought, was a relatively spacious home with a fine garden and a glimpse of the upper harbour. He was

Savage slept in a hollow log while tramping around Australia.
National Library of Australia

Benalla Fire Brigade and Band, some in fancy dress, outside the fire station in 1895. *La Trobe State Library of Victoria*

The North Prentice mine, where Savage first worked as a miner. *Mr Barry Deas, Rutherglen*

William and Roberta Savage and their two sons, with whom Savage boarded at North Prentice. *Mrs E.M. Brown*

Savage's father, Richard Savage, with grand-daughters May (left) and Eileen (right). *Mrs E.M. Brown*

May Savage and Aruba Alfrey née French outside the Rutherglen Co-operative Distribution Society, which Savage started. *Mrs Aruba Alfrey*

Savage's Empire Hotel, Wahgunyah, owned by Rowland Savage. Michael Savage made one of his earliest political addresses from the balcony. *Mrs Aruba Alfrey*

Political Labor Council conference, Melbourne, 1906. Savage is circled. *La Trobe State Library of Victoria*

to find with the French family peace, comfort, friendship and encouragement, which were to help sustain him throughout the difficult and stirring years ahead.

Alfred James French was seven years older than Savage. A onetime British navy marine bandmaster, he had survived the famous shipwreck of the *Wairarapa* at Great Barrier Island, during the course of which he had saved a young girl from drowning. After working as a goldminer at Waihi and as a coal-merchant at nearby Karangahake, he moved to Auckland in 1907 and worked on the construction of Grafton Bridge before becoming a stereotyper at the *Auckland Star*. Alf French loved his family, his garden and a good conversation. He also enjoyed music, playing the flute while his wife or daughter played the piano.

Elizabeth Mary French, who was about thirty when Savage arrived unexpectedly on the doorstep, was a quiet, kindly person who was never physically very strong and was to suffer serious ill-health for the last fourteen years of her life. She was devoted to her home and family: her husband Alf; her son Bob, who was eight years old in 1908; and her daughter Aruba, named after a tiny island in the Caribbean off the coast of Venezuela. In time, Savage also became very much part of that family: Alf and Elizabeth's closest friend; Bob's mate and best man at his wedding; and Aruba's favourite 'uncle'.

Savage arrived in Auckland literally penniless and borrowed 6*d*. from Alf French to get a haircut before he went looking for work. Because of the prejudice prevalent against Irish Catholics in parts of Auckland at that time, it was suggested to Savage that he should introduce himself as Joe Savage rather than Mick Savage. As it happened, Savage found employment where a man's religion did not matter to the employer—at a brewery owned by a Jewish family who traded under the name Hancock and Co. and who were happy to employ good workers irrespective of their religious beliefs or lack of them.[10]

The Captain Cook Brewery at the bottom of Khyber Pass in Newmarket was owned by Moss Davis and his two sons, Ernest and Eliot. It was one of the largest breweries in New Zealand, employing thirty to forty men, who brewed Hancock's XXXX ale and Bismark lager using the exceptionally pure water from wells bored deep into the lava rock that had flowed down from the nearby extinct volcano, Mount Eden.

Although Savage had to walk several miles across town from Ponsonby to Newmarket every morning and the same distance back home each night, he considered himself fortunate when William Sawbridge, the head brewer at the Captain Cook from 1897–1940, employed him. Working conditions at the brewery were relatively pleasant compared to most of Savage's previous jobs and the wages were above average. As a result, vacancies occurred infrequently and were usually filled by the sons, brothers, other relatives or close friends of men already on the brewery's payroll. One reason why Savage, a stranger, was employed was his first-class engine-

driver's qualification. At about the same time as Savage was taken on, Sawbridge also purchased a steam-engine and air-compressor, which had been used in the building of Grafton Bridge and which Sawbridge transferred to the brewery.

Savage did a variety of jobs in the brewery although, in later years, newspaper biographies tended to record that he washed out barrels and bottles or worked as a cellarman. Savage described himself as a 'rouseabout' in the brewery and one of his employers, Eliot Davis, recollected that he and Savage 'together on many occasions washed out the cellar with hoses and brooms'.[11]

Savage's main job at the Captain Cook, working on his own, was to filter the beer through two- to three-metre-long metal screens divided into grids and fitted with about seventy cotton pads, each fifty centimetres in diameter and four centimetres thick. Two or three filters were used, each containing about 100 kilograms of cotton pulp. When the beer was about a fortnight old and about six days after fermentation, Savage used the steam engine-compressor at twenty-five to thirty pounds pressure to blow the beer at freezing point from one tank into another through the filter screens, thus removing the yeast sediment. He then spent about two hours dismantling, scrubbing, sterilising, and pressing back into shape the cotton pulp pads, which were finally replaced in the filter screens ready for the next day.

Eliot Davis and Sawbridge both remembered Savage as a first-class, reliable employee, a pleasant workmate, a very moderate drinker, and a quiet, studious man often engrossed during lunch-hours in the radical books on which he spent a large part of his wages, or deep in thought, or keenly and vigorously debating the rights of the working man. Davis 'enjoyed having lunch with him. Each of us would sit on a beer barrel in the cask shed, and discuss over our bread and cheese, and perhaps a pint of beer, many of the important topics of the day'.[12]

After finding accommodation and a job in Auckland, Savage quickly became involved again in trade union activity and socialist agitation. Both the industrial and political Labour movements in New Zealand in 1908 were entering a dynamic and dramatic period in their histories.

As early as 1900 the first cracks had appeared in the mighty but unstable Liberal Party coalition, which had governed New Zealand since 1891. Sectional socio-economic vested interests made continued co-operation between small farmers and urban and rural wage-earners increasingly difficult. The Liberal Government had used the power and resources of the state to develop and expand the New Zealand economy. Roads and railways had been built, opening up the rural areas, where the purchase and subdivision of large holdings and Maori land led to a dramatic increase in the number of small farms. This was accompanied and largely facilitated by rising prices for food in Britain, which the fortuitous advent of refrigerated shipping allowed New Zealand to exploit.

But the small farmers, once established on the leasehold land, started to think and act more conservatively and particularly resented the Liberal Government's refusal to freehold their properties. They combined with the wealthier pastoralists and the more prosperous urban dwellers, who had never supported the Liberals, in forming an opposition party, which became in 1909 the Reform Party led by William Ferguson Massey.[13]

Paradoxically, at the same time as the Liberals were being deserted by farmers, who claimed that the government was too urban and trade-union oriented, a growing minority of trade unionists and middle-class radicals were arguing that the Liberal Party had lost its reforming zeal, which had been responsible for improving working conditions, enfranchising women, and through the Old Age Pensions Act of 1898 laying the foundation stone of New Zealand's social welfare system. The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1894 had established a system of settling industrial disputes, which throughout the 1890s worked to Labour's satisfaction and in the interests of urban workers and unionists. But after the turn of the century many union leaders became dissatisfied with the Arbitration Court's delays in hearing cases and its failure to compensate workers fully for increases in living costs. The more militant unionists demanded the right to use the strike weapon. The debate between militant and moderate unionists was not over the principle of the right to strike but over its usefulness as a practical weapon. Among the most prominent advocates of direct action were many of the new arrivals from Australia—men such as Semple, Webb and Savage. Their commitment to direct industrial action and their socialist political perspectives and objectives distanced the militants, who were concentrated particularly in the West Coast and Waihi miners' unions, from the more moderate union leaders who controlled the trades and labour councils in the major centres. By 1906, however, despite deep and bitter divisions over tactics and ultimate goals, there was a widespread commitment to the formation of an independent Labour political voice. Over the following ten years there emerged a succession of Labour and Socialist Parties, which seemed at times to be more concerned with attacking each other than providing a credible alternative to the Liberals and Reformers, but which finally and somewhat ambivalently united in 1916 to establish the New Zealand Labour Party.

After his arrival in Auckland in 1908, Savage became almost immediately president of the 154 members of the Auckland Brewers', Wine and Spirit Merchants' and Aerated Water Employees' Union, and that union's delegate to the Auckland Trades and Labour Council. In 1910 he was elected president of the Auckland Trades Council, which he represented at the New Zealand T and LC conference held in Auckland in July of that year. After considerable discussion and by a vote of 10–6, the conference decided to form a national, independent Labour Party. The new Labour Party would replace the by then largely defunct Political

Labor League, which had stood some candidates for Parliament at the 1905 and 1908 elections. Opposition to the proposal came from a minority of delegates led by Savage, who was not only president of the Auckland Trades Council but had been since 1908 the secretary of the Auckland Socialist Party. Savage and his allies wanted not just an independent Labour Party but one that advocated as its prime objective 'the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange', and they believed that the existing Socialist Party provided a suitable vehicle for Labour's independent political aspirations. Their subsequent attempt to include the socialist objective in the new Labour Party's platform also failed by 12 votes to 4. Savage refused to join the Labour Party and the following year, 1911, declined renomination as president of the Auckland Trades Council. He became instead the chairman of the Auckland branch of a rival trade union organistion, the New Zealand Federation of Labour, better known as the 'Red Feds', many of whose members were concurrently members of the Socialist Party.[14]

The New Zealand Federation of Labour had been established in 1909, growing out of the New Zealand Federation of Miners, formed the previous year. Its president was Savage's old friend Paddy Webb, a charming, emotional, hard-working man. Webb was a golden-tongued orator, almost as good as the Red Feds' national organiser, Bob Semple, a tall, slim, moustached, extravagant coiner of words whose flamboyant language was matched by his dapper, almost theatrical, dress. Within a short time the federation was joined by a number of non-mining unions, notably the shearers', the flaxworkers', some waterside workers', the Auckland General Labourers' Union, led by a recent arrival from Scotland, Peter (Pat) Fraser, and Savage's Auckland brewery workers'. The *Maoriland Worker*, a socialist newspaper that supported the Red Feds, commented that 'It is perhaps significant that the first City Union in New Zealand to declare in favour of the new Unionism was the one of which Savage was President'.[15]

Although very active in the Auckland union movement, Savage's first love was the Auckland Socialist Party. In March 1908 'a few socialists of the non-compromising sort', a description used as a compliment, had broken away from the PLL in Auckland and formed a branch of the Socialist Party. At the inaugural meeting it was decided to purchase a red flag, hold open-air meetings on Sunday afternoons, and invite 'Comrade Savage' to speak at those outdoor rallies. By May, within weeks of his arrival in Auckland, Savage and others were carrying out 'effective work on the platform'. When in that month Tom Mann gave six lectures on 'Socialism from the biblical, historical, and modern standpoints' to Auckland audiences, his earlier Rutherglen convert, Savage, was 'kept busy at the close of all meetings taking names and addresses of prospective members'. The Auckland branch rejoiced that 'many new converts are embracing the faith as it is in Karl Marx. . . . Their help is much needed to spread the gospel'.[16]

In the months following, Savage compiled a list of 300 unemployed people and presented it to the Prime Minister when Sir Joseph Ward visited Auckland. The *Commonweal* recorded approvingly that on the issue of unemployment Savage had been 'piling on the faggots' to create a conflagration of controversy.[17]

In October 1908 Savage took over as secretary of the branch and in the same month organised a public meeting on 'Socialism and Religion', addressed by Miss H. F. Powell, the former organiser for the Victorian PLC and advocate of women's emancipation whom Savage had escorted around the Rutherglen district in 1906 and 1907.[18]

In 1909 Savage's former ally in the Victorian PLC, Harry Scott Bennett, arrived in Auckland to become the Socialist Party's paid lecturer-organiser and editor of its paper, the *Social Democrat*. Within a short time Savage and Scott Bennett were joined in their leadership of the Auckland Socialist Party by several other new arrivals to New Zealand. Tom Barker, who was eventually to succeed Savage as secretary, was a former English Hussar who became an Auckland tram-driver. A restless man politically and geographically, Barker, who arrived in New Zealand in 1909, was to leave it in 1914, becoming first an organiser, for the Industrial Workers of the World in Australia and South America; then living in Russia and meeting Lenin, for whom he went to the United States to recruit technicians to assist Soviet industrialisation; and finally returning to England to become mayor of a London borough.[19] Pat Fraser, whom Barker described as 'a pawky Scotsman, with about two teeth in front. . . . a very quiet fellow [who] spoke in broad Scots and . . . was deeply read',[20] arrived in 1910 and soon became vice-chairman of the branch and secretary of the Auckland Labourers' Union. The editor of the *Maoriland Worker* reported after his first meeting with Fraser that he was a 'Comrade . . . about whom New Zealanders will hear plentifully directly, for he is the makings of a figure of force'.[21] A fifth leader of the Auckland Socialist Party was the urbane and thoughtful president of the Auckland Carpenters' Union, Tom Bloodworth, who was the party's supervisor of literature and whom Savage invariably greeted with the inquiry, 'Well, Tom, where are we now?'[22]

The Auckland Socialist Party, which by mid-1910 had 304 members, rented as its headquarters for £5 a week an old gospel hall, the Federal Hall, at the top of Wellesley Street West. The hall was open every night from 7–10 p.m., providing the socialists, and particularly the many bachelors living in central city boarding houses or, like Savage, renting a room in a private home, with a well-patronised social and educational centre. On Monday night the group met to listen to 'readings from the world's best books'. On Tuesday night there was a class on economics. Wednesday night was the weekly executive meeting. Thursday night was a full branch meeting, held monthly. The speaking and debating class met on Friday night. On Saturdays there was the weekly meeting of the

Socialist Physical Culture and Athletic Club, occasional picnics and a fortnightly dance. Sunday was a particularly busy day. At 3 p.m. open-air meetings were held at the wharf; at 5 p.m. fifty to sixty people met for tea in the party's rooms; at 7 p.m. there was another open-air meeting at the corner of Queen and Wellesley Streets; and at 7.30 p.m. there was a public lecture in the Opera House, the Globe Theatre or the Royal Albert Hall.[23]

Many Aucklanders who were not members of the Socialist Party regarded the Sunday night lecture as their weekly social outing. There was little alternative entertainment available except for church services. Scott Bennett, sometimes under the influence of alcohol, was the major draw-card. Preceded by the Socialist Party's orchestra and 'glee club', Scott Bennett enthralled the audience, usually about 1600 people, with his dynamic, descriptive eloquence and his invariably controversial lectures on socialist economics, Marxist philosophy, radical history, religion, militarism and sex. The last topic was discussed under such provocative titles as 'The Awful Truth about Marriage', in which the wage-earner's wife was portrayed as often being the 'slave of a slave'; 'Wage Earners, Wages and Babies'; and 'The Sexual Life of our Times'. Most of Scott Bennett's meetings were chaired by Savage, and at the conclusion some 300 copies of the *Maoriland Worker* were sold to members of the audience and a collection was taken that covered the rent of the theatre, the party's rooms and Scott Bennett's wage.

Although Savage sometimes spoke at the Sunday night meetings, most of his public speaking was in the open air. Week after week, year after year, Savage was the Auckland Socialist Party's most active soap-box orator, addressing audiences ranging in size from one or two passers-by and a stray dog to over a thousand people. The *Social Democrat* commented that Savage, as a speaker, 'has a fine expression, very clear and deliberate, weighs his words well, and is heard to advantage in the open air'. He tried primarily to appeal to reason but did not ignore the emotional impact. His material was invariably prepared with great care, the main points tabulated, and the theories and principles applied to everyday situations. Savage concentrated on issues rather than personalities, argued with sincerity and great conviction, and was unruffled by interjections, which he either ignored or rebutted with gentle humour. At one Sunday afternoon meeting, for example, a persistent interjector launched a barrage against Savage and all 'thieving Socialists'. Barker recalled that Savage 'in his plain, matter-of-fact answers and illustrations thoroughly discomfited the little man, much to the delight of the large crowd'.[24]

Totally committed to the extension of his socialist cause, Savage not only devoted his spare time to union and party activities but, when he had saved a few pounds and with the agreement of a tolerant employer, would take several weeks' holiday without pay and devote himself to full-time propaganda until his money ran out. In 1913, for example, he ordered

20 000 copies of Ted Howard's humorous 'Henry Dubb' because Savage believed that it successfully spoke to the 'bottom dog' and had decided that '[I] am going to place one in every home in Auckland, or have a big try anyway'.[25]

The educative nature of the Auckland Socialist Party was reflected in its membership card, which stated that 'the objects of the Party shall be to work for the organisation of New Zealand as a Co-operative Commonwealth, in which the land and all the instruments of production, distribution and exchange shall be owned and managed by the people collectively' and that the methods to be used in pursuit of those objectives would be: '(a) the propagation of Socialism by meetings, lectures, debates, and classes; (b) the circulation of books, papers, pamphlets and leaflets of a socialist nature; (c) the utilisation of the press in spreading the principles of the Party; (d) the organisation of Socialists for united action at elections'.[26]

Savage and his Auckland socialist colleagues sought to educate the public in general and trade unionists in particular in the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, translated into English by Ernest Untermann; the books on dialectical philosophy, socialism, the human mind and the religion of the dispossessed by Joseph Dietzgen,[27] a German workman admired by his contemporaries Marx and Engels and also translated by Untermann; the theories of the American radical thinkers Henry George and Edward Bellamy; the guild socialism first outlined in the British Journal *New Age* in 1912 and 1913 and which was to have an influence particularly on Tom Bloodworth; the social critiques and tactical suggestions of French and Italian syndicalists such as Georges Sorel, who insisted on the importance of passionate faith and violence in producing political and social change; and the views on the emancipation of women propounded by the German Socialist Party leader August Bebel in his *Women Under Socialism*, which went through fifty editions between its first publication in 1879 and its author's death in 1909. Tons of radical books, pamphlets and newspapers were imported and distributed, especially from the Clarion Press in London and C.H. Kerr & Co. of Chicago. Prominent among these publications was *The Appeal to Reason*, a newspaper published in Kansas, which in 1911 was printing up to 3 100 000 copies an issue, and whose editorial writer was the American socialist Eugene Debs.[28]

The American literature reflected the syndicalist views of the Industrial Workers of the World, the IWW, who believed generally that between the working and the employing classes there was no common ground and that the workers should organise industrially into one big union and seize power by means of a general strike. But the American syndicalists and socialists, like those in New Zealand, were far from united: the Chicago IWW moved to an exclusively industrial, almost anarchist, position; Daniel de Leon and his supporters in Detroit advocated a dual strategy of a vanguard, revolutionary, elite party, similar to Lenin's Bolsheviks, and

revolutionary industrial unionism; Debs and the Amerian Socialist Party stressed reformism through both political and industrial action; and William D. Haywood, whom Savage and the Auckland Socialists sought unsuccessfully to bring to New Zealand, wanted to create 'one big union' and overthrow capitalism by industrial means. However, he was also prepared to accept political campaigning as a legitimate secondary activity, as Haywood and Frank Bohn explained in their widely distributed pamphlet *Industrial Socialism*.

At the 1911 parliamentary elections the moderate Labour Party nominated seventeen official candidates, the Socialist Party seven, and there were several independent Labour and Socialist candidates. Many Red Feds and socialists at that time were opposed to contesting elections, stressing instead the priorities of propaganda and industrial organisation. It is doubtful whether there would have been even one Socialist candidate in Auckland had not Savage wanted to stand and had he not had the influence to get his own way. His selection as candidate for Auckland Central was unanimous, but the initial decision to contest the election seriously divided the Auckland branch.[29]

Savage opened his campaign in July 1911 at a meeting in the Federal Hall. He claimed that capitalism would be overthrown by 'the organisation of the workers' through 'the industrial union on the one hand and a class conscious political party upon the other'.[30] He devoted most of his address to criticising the arbitration system, explaining the key features of socialism and industrial unionism, and attacking militarism and compulsory military training. Later in the election campaign he revisited the goldmining town of Waihi, addressing several large meetings in support of the Socialist candidate for that seat, Pat Hickey.[31]

Savage's nomination was warmly welcomed by the *Maoriland Worker*, which described him as an 'admirable candidate', 'a fearless fighter . . . without superior' as a champion of the workers and the oppressed, and as 'an industrial unionist and a socialist and anti-militarist' who 'is not afraid to stand under the Red Flag—the people's banner'.[32] The newspaper attributed the 'splendid organisation' of the Auckland Socialist Party to Savage's 'energy, enthusiasm and organisational ability'. When the *Worker*'s editor, Bob Ross, another socialist from the State of Victoria, visited Auckland shortly before polling day he was impressed particularly by the house-to-house canvassing and numerous outdoor meetings in which Savage and his supporters were engaged, and reported, 'I fell mightily in love with their methods and gloried in their sensibleness of choice of candidate. Savage towers above his opponents, and I'll swear is as true as steel to us'.[33]

Savage was the sole Socialist candidate in a non-mining seat to poll well at the 1911 election, although in coming second in a four-way contest he secured only 1800 votes to the 4061 cast for the successful Liberal. The election revealed, however, the broad base of support that Savage

enjoyed in the Auckland Labour movement. Alone of the Socialist Party's candidates throughout New Zealand, Savage had the advertised support of prominent moderate trade union leaders. Already Savage was benefiting from his very real gift of being able to inspire confidence in and win support from others. Unlike some of his more flamboyant socialist colleagues, this slightly built, gentle and courteous bachelor, with an intense expression and smouldering eyes, was trusted and liked by nearly all his contemporaries, both militant and moderate, in the Auckland Labour movement. His very simple life-style and tenacious commitment to his cause, and the fact that he showed little interest in intrigue and apparently harboured no malice towards those whose views he opposed, commanded almost universal respect.

Not all Savage's Socialist Party comrades regretted his defeat. Bloodworth wrote:

> For well nigh three years I have fought alongside Savage in the Socialist Party—sometimes in prosperity, sometimes in what seemed to be adversity. I have never been much enamoured of politics, and I think that the first time Savage and I voted against each other was on the question as to whether we should contest this election. Savage was on the side that won that time. I was in the minority, and since then I have sometimes been afraid that my comrade was going into the 'talkee shoppee'. I know that he was far too good a man to go there. Anyway, my fears have been dispelled. Savage is still in the workshop—that is, he is free to work for industrial organisation. The political battle is over for three years. . . . The work which Savage will do on the industrial field will, I think, be of more lasting good than the work he would have tried to do on the political field.[34]

The 1911 election campaign not only divided the Auckland Socialist Party but also increased the ill-feeling generally among the various Labour factions in the city. The differences over conflicting goals, alternative forms of industrial and political organisation, and apparently irreconcilable tactics were exacerbated by personality clashes among most of the protagonists. Into the midst of this disunity there had arrived a few months before the election a 'fiery little wizard of eloquence', a remarkable American, about four-and-a-half feet tall and with a face framed by massive mutton-chop whiskers that reinforced the overall appearance of a leprechaun. 'Professor' Walter Thomas Mills, 'the Milwaukee midget', was a superb orator, the content of whose speeches was as interesting as his platform presentation was inspiring. He was brought to New Zealand by the Trades and Labour Councils' Federation and preached to large and generally enthusiastic audiences on the formation of a united radical party incorporating all the useful and good people in society: unionists, Christians, women, small farmers, humanitarians, prohibitionists, radical intellectuals, land-tax advocates and monetary reformers. He argued that the vision of revolution by a class-conscious proletariat had no validity in a predominantly rural society such as New Zealand and launched a vitriolic attack on the Red

Feds and socialists. Scott Bennett attempted to counter Mills's growing influence, and a series of debates were held between the two men, culminating in Auckland during the 1911 election campaign. Each man personified and propounded not only the views of his faction on industrial and political matters but also on religion and prohibition, Scott Bennett being in favour of neither and Mills being an advocate, if not a practitioner, of both.

A few days after the 1911 election Scott Bennett left New Zealand, intending to visit Australia and then to spend the next fourteen to fifteen months touring England, Europe and the United States. At Scott Bennett's farewell Savage presented his close colleague with a cheque, the proceeds of a fund established and promoted by Savage as a testimonial to the departing lecturer.

A few weeks later two more Auckland Socialist Party leaders—Bloodworth and Savage—announced their impending departure from New Zealand. Bloodworth married another active Auckland socialist, Rhoda Aspin, and decided to return temporarily to Britain. But the resignation that stunned and dismayed the Socialist Party locally and nationally was that of its Auckland secretary, Savage, for what Savage himself cryptically termed 'a complication of circumstances'. The *Maoriland Worker*'s comments were typical of those expressed throughout the movement.

> M. J. Savage is reported to be on the eve of departure from Auckland. We are sorry. Comrade Savage is one of the men in the movement that we can ill spare. During his sojourn in Auckland his work on behalf of his class has been stupendous. Solid, uncompromising and energetic, the Auckland movement owes much to Savage. . . . As secretary of the Socialist Party almost from its inception, President of the Brewery Workers' Union, ex-President of the Auckland Trades and Labor Council, chairman of the Auckland Propaganda Branch, N.Z.F.L., and Socialist candidate for Auckland Central, Savage has striven with all his might to further the principles of Socialism and Industrial Unionism, and right well he has succeeded. Whilst genuinely deploring the departure of M. J. Savage from New Zealand, we join with his many comrades and friends in wishing him the best of health and prosperity on his return to his native land—Victoria.[35]

The reason for Savage's resignation in February 1912 and his decision to return to Australia remains unclear. Perhaps it had something to do with his dispute with Bloodworth and others over the desirability of political action. Perhaps the departure of his closest political colleague, Scott Bennett, had unsettled him. Perhaps the growing rift within the Auckland Socialist Party, between those such as Black who were moving towards an anti-industrial unionism position and those such as Barker who were moving towards a very militant syndicalism, had temporarily dispirited him. Perhaps after four-and-a-half years in New Zealand he simply wanted to see again the surviving members of his family, and his fortieth birthday was only three or four weeks away. Perhaps it was a combination

of pressures and reasons.

Savage, however, did not return to Australia. Several days after his resignation as secretary and before he had time to embark on a ship, the Auckland City Council, under its mayor, C. J. Parr, moved to smash the Auckland General Labourers' Union and decide, in Parr's statement, whether the council or 'revolutionary syndicalism in its worst form . . . under Messrs Parry, Fraser and Company' was going 'to dominate this city'.[36] There was no way that Savage would desert his comrades at such a time; Scott Bennett, hearing the news, also abandoned his overseas trip at Adelaide and returned forthwith to Auckland. Barker had replaced Savage as secretary of the Auckland Socialist Party but Savage took up the literature and propaganda secretaryship vacated by Bloodworth.

The bitter industrial dispute between the Auckland City Council and the labourers' union erupted only weeks before the local body elections. Savage and Scott Bennett addressed a 'vast meeting' in the Opera House, at the conclusion of which it was decided unanimously to nominate a candidate against Parr for the mayoralty.[37] There were three nominations: Savage; Arthur Rosser, secretary of nine unions and a former city councillor; and P. Richardson, the president of the Tramway Workers' Union. At a subsequent mass meeting of Auckland trade unions, both 'Red Fed' and arbitrationist, Savage received 750 of the 800 votes cast but accepted the nomination only on condition that it was endorsed by the Auckland Socialist Party.[38] He had argued consistently that the Socialist Party alone was a suitable vehicle for independent Labour political activity. On the following Saturday the Socialist Party met and at Fraser's instigation declined to endorse Savage's nomination on the grounds that if he was elected he would be unable to do anything because the city council would continue to be dominated by middle-class councillors.[39] Savage reluctantly withdrew from the contest, leaving the unions to support a lawyer, A. Hall Skelton, as the lesser of two evils for the mayoralty. Parr gave Hall Skelton an electoral drubbing and a few months later Fraser's labourers' union, defeated, decimated and demoralised, surrendered and returned to the arbitration system, rejecting both industrial unionism and direct bargaining.[40]

Savage continued in speeches and articles and at the 1912 annual conference of the New Zealand Socialist Party to express himself forcefully against unions, trades councils, or even the Federation of Labour being directly involved in the political arena. The editor of the *Worker* observed:

> Regarding the relationship of the Socialist Party to the Federation of Labour, we note that M. J. Savage—whose opinions are always weighty—writes approvingly in the *Social Democrat* of the action of conference in asserting that the Socialist Party alone, and not an industrial organisation, should 'run' candidates for public office, Savage mentioning that it is desirable that the political field be entirely free to the S.P. as the only political party with a just claim to being the true reflex of Industrial Unionism.[41]

The Socialist Party did not, however, have the political field to itself. The indefatigable Mills had proposed a scheme to create one Labour organisation for both industrial and political purposes. It was to be structured on IWW lines but without the IWW objectives and tactics. In April 1912, after five days of discussion, a unity conference in Wellington, sponsored by the Trades and Labour Councils, decided to establish a United Labour Party of New Zealand.

Most of the Red Feds, including Savage, were suspicious of the new party, which appeared to be indifferent, if not antagonistic, to socialism and industrial unionism. They were also suspicious of educated, middle-class intellectuals and businessmen who were attracted into assisting the Labour movement by humanitarian motives rather than driven into it by economic necessity. Savage doubted whether those who were not working class would ever be able to free themselves completely from the values and perspectives of the class from which they had come. Because of their intermediate position between the workers and the upper class, the middle class were by nature compromisers who would draw back from really radical action. When the ULP leader J. T. Paul addressed the 1912 Red Fed conference in an attempt to persuade it to support the ULP, Savage challenged him on this very matter. Savage 'was anxious to know if the ULP was prepared to admit members of both classes in the class struggle. If so, he desired to point out the danger of having conflicting economic interests in the one organisation'.[42] The leaders of the working class, Savage believed, should not be paternalistic petty bourgeoisie but manual workers speaking from personal experience about the tribulations and aspirations of those they claimed to represent, and yet at the same time workers who had educated themselves as thoroughly as possible in economics generally and socialism in particular. As a result, Savage and the majority of the Auckland Socialist Party remained aloof from the Auckland District Council of the ULP, which was set up in August 1912 under the chairmanship of a menswear retailer and former Liberal Minister of Education, George Fowlds.

Instead Savage worked tirelessly to strengthen the position of the Socialist Party and the Federation of Labour. At the latter's 1912 conference he advocated reforming the Red Fed's industrial organisation along the lines of the IWW and was one of a committee of nine elected to draw up the rules and constitution for such an organisation.[43] He also addressed a public meeting in the Wellington Opera House on 'The Message of Industrial Unionism' and, at the conference social evening, moved a toast to the Waihi miners, who were currently engaged in a bitter dispute with their employers.

The Waihi strike, which had started in May 1912, threw the Auckland Labour movement into turmoil. In July the Reform Party under William Ferguson Massey, aided by defections in Parliament of a number of former Liberals, ended the Liberal Government's twenty-one years' tenure of office.

Massey moved swiftly and decisively against the Waihi miners, who were among the strongest supporters of industrial unionism and political socialism. A large number of miners' leaders were ordered to find bonds to keep the peace, and within a short time sixty-eight strikers, including the union's president, Bill Parry, were in Mount Eden gaol in Auckland for refusing to find the securities.

Savage who had by then become chairman of the Socialist Party in Auckland as well as chairman of the Auckland Red Feds, was as prominent in speaking in support of Parry's Waihi miners as he had been in support of Fraser's Auckland labourers some months before. He addressed meetings at the wharf and from the Grey statue outside the Town Hall. On one occasion a non-Labour newspaper estimated that the crowd listening to Savage and others numbered 18 000 people.[44] Savage also helped raise funds for the strikers and their families, visited the imprisoned miners, and organised demonstrations outside the prison walls.

Nothing could save the strike. Although Savage's employer, the brewer Ernest Davis, who was subsequently to be a major source of Labour Party funds for half a century, paid £1,600 in securities to free the strike leaders from prison, the striking miners were driven out of Waihi by force, one of their number, Frederick Evans, being killed. Savage arranged accommodation in Auckland for the refugee strikers and their families in the Socialist Party and Trades and Labour Halls. Evans's funeral, organised by the Red Feds in Auckland, became a massive public demonstration against the government.

The total defeat of the Waihi strike re-emphasised the importance of unity in the Labour movement and the dangers inherent in neglecting political power. Within days of the end of the Waihi strike the Red Feds sent out letters inviting all unions, irrespective of their previous or current allegiance, to attend another unity conference in January 1913. That meeting, attended by representatives of eighty-eight unions, the ULP, and the Socialist Party, but not the IWW, which declined to attend, decided to meet again in July when firm proposals for uniting the industrial and political Labour movements would be discussed further.

In the months leading up to the July unity congress, Savage addressed a unity campaign rally at the Albert Hall in Auckland and seconded a motion that Auckland socialists, unionists, and those who wanted an independent Labour Party should support the unity proposals. Subsequently, at the July conference, Savage was one of five delegates who represented the New Zealand Executive of the Socialist Party. In ten days of debate the conference decided to create a new industrial organisation, the United Federation of Labour, whose major object was 'to organise systematically and scientifically upon an industrial union basis, in order to assist the overthrow of the capitalist system and thus bring about a co-operative commonwealth based upon industrial democracy'. A new political party, the Social Democratic Party, was also formed, its

constitution and platform including, as an unqualified objective, 'the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange'.

The Wellington Socialist Party was very reluctant to submerge itself in the new SDP and eventually decided to retain a separate identity. The national president and secretary of the Socialist Party, Ted Howard and Fred Cooke, both of Christchurch, were also, as late as October, recommending that while the Socialist Party affiliate to the SDP the Socialist Party should also stay in existence as a propaganda agency within the SDP to make sure that the new party continued to recognise the class war, the need to abolish the wage system, and the goal of a co-operative commonwealth. Savage had no such misgivings. The SDP had accepted an unqualified and public commitment to socialism, and Savage also probably agreed with Scott Bennett who, regretting his break with the non-socialist Labour movement in Australia six years before, was by 1913 arguing that socialists were wrong to stand exclusively aloof and 'regard themselves as "Little Bethels" and shut themselves off from any differences of opinion within their own'.[45]

Within weeks of the unity congress, Savage had formed an Auckland branch of the SDP, with himself as president and Miss Muriel Glyde, the secretary also of the Auckland Women's Progressive Society, as its secretary. By September the Auckland Socialist Party had resolved to dissolve itself, and all its assets had been handed over to the SDP. Savage then organised and chaired a public meeting at the Opera House, where the aims of the UF of L and SDP were explained to some 1400 people.

Admittedly, by 1913, although the *Maoriland Worker* could still describe the Auckland Socialist Party propagandists as 'second to none' and its literature department as 'undoubtedly the finest in the country',[46] the Auckland Socialists were not as strong or as active as they had been a year or two before. Membership had dropped from 304 in 1910 to 66 in 1913.[47] Fraser had moved to Wellington, Barker had resigned as secretary to join the IWW, Bloodworth had returned to England for a visit, and in January 1913 the party had decided to close down its Sunday night lectures, although Scott Bennett continued to address meetings independently. For a time, until the unity proposals revived public interest, Savage appeared to be keeping the Socialist Party and its open-air meetings going almost single-handedly. Bloodworth, on his return in March 1913, observed that during his absence the unity of the Auckland Labour and socialist movements had been disrupted, many of those once active in the Socialist Party were now active in the IWW, and many others appeared to be taking a rest and had not been replaced by younger socialists.[48]

One newcomer on the scene was the Australian socialist journalist Harry Holland, an intelligent, extremely well-read, rather dogmatic Marxist, who was to have a considerable influence on the nature of the Labour Party that was to emerge in New Zealand in the following years.[49] Holland had arrived in New Zealand in 1912 during the Waihi

strike and in March and April 1913 accepted an invitation from Savage to visit Auckland and speak on a variety of subjects, including the unity proposals, conscription and compulsory military training, and the Paris Commune. It was the start of a political relationship between the two men that, although it never became a close personal friendship, was to last until Holland's death and Savage's succession to Labour's leadership twenty years later.

Savage shared not only Scott Bennett's growing desire to bring the socialists together with the broader Labour movement but also Scott Bennett's scepticism about and antagonism towards the established Christian churches and their perceived neglect of the poor and of social justice. Bloodworth remembered that at his first meeting with Savage, Savage gave Bloodworth a rationalist pamphlet.[50] When in September 1913 Mrs Caroline Scott Bennett, who had been responsible for her husband becoming a socialist in Melbourne five years before, died at the age of thirty-five following an emergency operation for appendicitis, the rationalist burial service at Waikumete cemetery was conducted by 'Comrade M. J. Savage'.[51] At that time Savage's religious outlook was very much influenced by such humanistic writers as Dietzgen and Blatchford, who argued that traditional religion was a mixture of superstition, ignorance, hypocrisy, unquestioning authority, and social and political conservatism. A socialist's religion should be to do the best possible in this life for dispossessed, alienated and suffering humanity.

The year 1913 saw not only the birth of the SDP and the death of Mrs Scott Bennett but also, in October, a waterfront dispute that by November had escalated into a general strike. Nowhere was the strike supported more strongly by the unions than in Auckland, where fifteen of the eighteen supposedly moderate arbitrationist unions that joined with the former Red Feds in the strike throughout New Zealand were located. Unions that under normal conditions would not have supported the strike did so because of their resentment at the Reform Party Government's partisan stance and because of the role played by thousands of young farmers, 'Massey's Cossacks', who, armed and mounted on horseback, poured into the cities to act as special constables and temporary wharf labourers. When the general strike ended after eleven days, relations between town and country, unionist and farmer, had been poisoned for a generation.

Inevitably, Savage became one of the strike leaders in Auckland, together with Bloodworth, Barker, Muriel Glyde, Bob Way and Jim Purtell, who was to remain one of Savage's friends and confidants for the rest of his life. The Auckland Strike Committee brought out a strike paper three times a week; established a commissariat in the basement of the Trades Hall from which groceries were issued to strikers; erected a huge marquee at the back of the Trades Hall where meals were cooked and served to strikers and their families; arranged concerts and dances to

maintain morale; planned and carried out pickets at the wharves; and organised a children's Christmas stocking fund.

Within a few days of the general strike being called many of its most prominent leaders, especially in Wellington, had been arrested, including Semple, Fraser, Holland and Tom Young, the president of the UF of L and secretary of the Seaman's Union. Barker and Savage left Auckland by train for Wellington, where Barker was also imprisoned. Barker recalled that journey with some humour:

> When we were near Wellington, I think at a place called Otaki, we saw a crowd on the station and found that the Governor General himself was to board the train and when we came to Wellington a gigantic crowd was waiting. We thought they were there to welcome the Governor General, but they weren't waiting for the Governor General at all—they were waiting for us! When we got off the train we found that they had brought a horse coach; they took the two horses out, got ropes and towed Joe Savage and myself into the Post Office Square where we had to make another harangue to the audience.[52]

Savage's major reason for going to Wellington was to speak at 'the largest demonstration yet held in Wellington'[53] in support of the strike and its jailed leaders. On Sunday afternoon, 16 November 1913, thousands of unionists and their families with banners and bands paraded from the Post Office Square to Newtown Park, where Savage attacked the press for telling lies about the strike and appealed to the workers of Wellington to support the strike as strongly as were the Auckland unions, including his own brewery workers. At a rally held the following week Savage asked,

> Did the authorities believe . . . that after the gaoling of a few men there were not others to take their places? . . . Mr Massey was capable of doing the same for New Zealand as Bismarck did for Germany by oppressing the workers and causing them to rise in revolt. . . . He urged the workers not to forget to make use of their vote at the election and their industrial organisation in the meantime.[54]

The total defeat of the Auckland labourers' strike, the Waihi miners' strike, and finally the waterfront and general strikes of 1913 convinced most socialist and Labour leaders that political action to control the state must be given primacy over industrial confrontation against employers backed by a hostile government. Although the SDP's finances were sadly depleted and its secretary, Fraser, was in prison, the SDP could take some consolation from the success of two of its candidates in parliamentary by-elections during 1913. The former Liberal draper and prohibition leader Jimmy McCombs won Lyttelton and Paddy Webb became the MP for the West Coast mining seat of Grey.

In January 1914 the SDP decided to expand its full-time staff and launch a major offensive to build up its membership. Fraser was to continue as secretary, Mills was to be the chief organiser, and four new full-time organisers were appointed. The Auckland city and provincial organiser

Savage worked as a flax-cutter in a Manawatu swamp after his arrival in New Zealand in 1907. *Auckland Institute and Museum*

Hancock's Brewery in 1902. The brewery, owned by the Davis family, was where Savage found employment in Auckland.

Savage in 1911

Letter to Mrs Emily Gibson, 4 July 1911, from M.J. Savage as secretary of the Auckland branch of the Socialist Party. Mr *N.V. Douglas*

SOCIALISM

N.Z. SOCIALIST PARTY.

AUCKLAND BRANCH.

FEDERAL HALL,

WELLESLEY STREET.

4/7/1911

DEAR COMRADE,

I have pleasure in advising you of your Election as a Member of above, and trust that your presence in the Movement will be of mutual advantage.

Kindly attend at above Address at your earliest, when a Membership Card will be issued to you.

Yours for the Revolution,

M.J. Savage

SECRETARY.

Mrs Emily Gibson
Rose-15?
Grey Lynn

Peter Fraser in 1911

Harry Scott Bennett in 1911

Savage (kneeling centre) and other Labour leaders in Auckland at a picnic in 1911. Standing are Black (far left), Way (fourth from left), and Bartram (far right). *Alexander Turnbull Library*

Socialists at their 1911 conference. Savage is seated third from the right. *Alexander Turnbull Library*

Crowd outside New Zealand Socialist Party hall in Auckland, 1911. Note the two posters on the walls advertising Savage as a Socialist candidate at the 1911 elections. *Auckland Institute and Museum*

was Savage, who was at first financially supported by collections and membership subscriptions but was later paid £3 per week after the SDP received a loan from Australia.

Savage threw himself into his new job with an energy that impressed other SDP leaders. Mills reported that Savage was 'doing splendid work'; Bob Heffron, the president of the Auckland Labourers' Union, first secretary of the Auckland District Council of the UF of L, and secretary of the new Parnell branch of the SDP, wrote to the *Worker* that 'Things are moving in the Northern City' because 'Joe Savage is doing great work up here. He is a fighter of the first order'; and Fraser noted that 'Auckland is seething with activity . . . Savage . . . is busy as blazes'.[55] Savage immediately organised about 130 volunteers who were willing to canvass systematically door to door throughout Auckland and set a target of 500 SDP members in an electorate before it could select a candidate. By May there were four branches of the SDP in Auckland—Auckland Central, which by July was the first to reach its 500 target, Parnell, Eden and Grey Lynn, where the independent Labour MP John Payne and his committee were converted to the SDP. Savage also travelled several times during early 1914 to Waihi and Thames, speaking and organising there.

The *Maoriland Worker* noted that many members of the SDP in Auckland were unmarried men, but Savage had always placed great importance on involving women in any political party with which he had been associated. Working with Mrs Jane Donaldson, the SDP's women's organiser who came up from Wellington to spend seven weeks in Auckland, the local SDP secretary, Miss Glyde, Mrs Rhoda Bloodworth, and Miss Winnifred Moore, Savage organised two branches of the Housewives' Union in Auckland Central and Eden; invited the Auckland Women's Political League to affiliate to the SDP; arranged a series of lectures and discussions to prepare women to take a more active role in public life; and established, in conjunction with Savage's own Auckland Central branch, an Auckland Co-operative Buying Association to reduce the cost of living for its members through bulk purchasing.

At the 1914 annual conference of the SDP held in Wellington, the annual report noted that, 'Mr Savage has had Auckland City and province to attend to. The strength of the branches there is testimony to the effectiveness of his work'.[56] At that conference Savage participated in a number of debates. He advocated the selection of candidates through a ballot of members of local branches and affiliated unions. He observed that 'economic laws would destroy the small holder'. He moved that there should be direct representation by the SDP on the board of the *Maoriland Worker*. He was elected to a committee of five to report on the best ways of encouraging the formation of co-operatives.

In a debate on what the SDP should do or advise in any electorate where there was no official SDP candidate, Savage moved a motion, carried by 30 votes to 20, 'that no member of the SDP shall take any public part

in furthering the interests of any other political party', a theme that he enlarged on when he addressed an evening social gathering attended by some 150 delegates to the SDP and UF of L conferences. Savage argued that 'Unfortunately, some said the time had not arrived for a Labour Party, and pinned their faith to the Liberals. He wanted to ask those people when the time would arrive? What had they got from the Liberals in the past?'[57] Savage was to remain an intransigent opponent of any electoral alliance between Labour and the Liberals.

Surprisingly, at the 1914 conference Savage took no part in either of two debates on the SDP's attitude to prohibition of alcohol. But he took a strong stand in the conference debate on pacifism and disarmament. Although two years before, at the 1912 Socialist Party conference, Savage had acknowledged that the armed forces in a capitalist state could be used to buttress capitalism and to hold down the workers[58] and although since 1911 he had frequently addressed meetings in Auckland against militarism and compulsory military training, Savage saw no inconsistency in also opposing the pacifists at the 1914 SDP conference. He told those who sought unsuccessfully to change the SDP constitution to include a policy of total disarmament that a nation needed voluntary citizen defence forces and that he disagreed anyway with the basic pacifist position. 'He did not like the idea of turning the other cheek. The workers had had them both knocked about too much.'[59] Within weeks, New Zealand, together with the rest of the British Empire, was at war with Germany.

VI
THE PATH TO PARLIAMENT 1914–19

FORTY-FIVE PER CENT of New Zealand's male population of military age served in the armed forces during the 1914–18 war. Well over half were casualties, and one in seven died in the muddy wastes of European battlefields. A whole generation of New Zealand men was decimated, their wives left widows and their children orphans.

Although many moderate Labour leaders gave their total support to the war effort, most New Zealand socialists, including Savage, adopted from the first a negative attitude to the conflict. They denounced jingoism and militarism and viewed the conflict in Europe from a Marxist perspective. To the socialists, especially those of Irish descent, the war was a struggle among aristocrats and capitalists for empires and markets. Tim Armstrong was not alone in stating that he had

> no quarrel with the German or Austrian people, nor do I believe they have with us, so for my part let those who have the quarrel go and do the fighting. I do not think it my duty to go and fight for a crowd of capitalistic despots who have been sucking the life's blood out of the workers in Britain, Germany, France and every other country for generations. Let the Kings and Kaisers go and murder one another if they like, but the working class have no quarrel one country with the other.[1]

As the war dragged on, with increasing ferocity and appalling human cost, many New Zealand socialists, led by the editor of the *Maoriland Worker*, Holland, started to argue that the war was a crisis that would lead to the disintegration and collapse of capitalism internationally and result subsequently and inevitably in worldwide social revolution.[2] The task of the New Zealand socialist movement, therefore, was to unite, educate, organise and mobilise the working class and prepare it for the

assumption of power in the post-war era.

The outbreak of the war in August 1914 exacerbated the divisions within the Labour movement and the SDP, which by October was almost bankrupt. Savage, who had been selected as SDP candidate for Auckland Central at the forthcoming elections, gave up his position as paid organiser and returned to the brewery. Scott Bennett, who had taken over from Mills as national organiser for the SDP only a few months before, returned to Australia when the SDP found it impossible to guarantee even his reduced salary.

Since the beginning of 1914 Savage had been busy organising a Labour-socialist campaign for the eight Auckland electorates, of which finally only three were contested. Savage was not impressed by the Liberal-Labour electoral alliances that were negotiated throughout much of New Zealand at the 1914 elections, although the alliance was to prove largely responsible for only one Reform MP being elected on a minority vote. Savage admitted that Reform was the 'arch enemy' but he added that the workers also needed to drop the Liberal Party 'as they would a worn out tool'. The workers should represent themselves in Parliament and not place themselves 'in the hands of professional politicians'.[3] Savage was particularly annoyed that many unionists, including the Auckland Seamen's Union, were supporting his Liberal opponent in Auckland Central, 'the hilarious Albert Edward Glover, the Merry Andrew of the House'.[4] The *Truth* newspaper predicted that although Savage would win a solid vote, 'No one can for a moment entertain the idea that Joe will win, because Glover is the hardest man to beat in New Zealand today'.[5]

The 1914 parliamentary elections were held in December, only a few months after the outbreak of war and before the horrible reality of mass slaughter had started to register with the New Zealand population. Although Savage did not neglect the war, he spoke most fervently during the campaign about the solidarity of Labour. He argued that 'the crucifixion of Labour is taking place before our eyes' as modern machinery and cheap labour revolutionised production on the markets of the world, making it very difficult for New Zealand producers to compete. He drew on his experiences at North Yanco, asking, 'Can a man with a double-furrowed plough, drawn by horse, compete successfully with a man using 50 furrows drawn by the modern traction? Can man-made laws prevent the operation of the law of value? Surely not!'[6] Labour had to unite and organise if it was to have any chance of defending itself.

Labour, under its various labels, went into the 1914 election with six seats. It emerged with still only six. Reform under Massey won forty-one seats out of the total of eighty and continued to form the government. Savage's vote and his percentage of the vote in Auckland Central in 1914 were almost identical to what he had received in 1911; 1800 (twenty-three per cent) in 1911 and 1751 (twenty-four per cent) in 1914. That was hardly

a satisfactory return for three years of strenuous effort.

Immediately after the parliamentary elections, however, Savage started tenaciously reorganising the Auckland political Labour movement, and on 25 January 1915 the Auckland Labour Representation Committee was founded, with Savage as secretary.[7] The LRC consisted initially of twenty-seven affiliated unions, two branches of the SDP (Central and Parnell), and the Auckland Housewives' Union. Savage commented that, whereas in the past individuals had spoken on behalf of Labour in Auckland and this had caused trouble, in future public questions would be discussed at meetings of the LRC and resolved so that Labour could speak with one voice on its own behalf.[8]

The LRC's first task was to find candidates for the 1915 local body elections. Savage approached not only socialists and unionists but also a number of those on the fringe of Labour politics, notably Fowlds, to see if they would stand for the Auckland City Council or the hospital board. Although expressing his general approval of the LRC's 'moderate' local body policy, Fowlds declined.[9] In the end, the LRC was able to find only six candidates, including Savage, for the council and three, including an American woman doctor, Florence Keller, for the hospital board. In gaining the highest vote for a Labour candidate, Savage ran well ahead of the other five Labour nominees but failed to secure a seat on the council. Labour's only success was Dr Keller, who easily topped the poll for the hospital board.

Dr Keller had come into contact with Savage and other Auckland Labour leaders partly through the Workers' Educational Association, which the Auckland unions had established earlier in the year. The Auckland WEA met in the Leys Institute building in Ponsonby, a relatively short stroll from the home of Savage, who was a foundation member. Florence Keller and another woman doctor, Elizabeth Macdonald, conducted classes on women's health; economics classes were conducted by several lecturers including Professor Joseph Grossman of Auckland University College; industrial history and law were taught by other tutors including Ronald Algie, who was later to become a professor of law and a prominent National Party politician; and Fowlds and other speakers gave lectures on a variety of subjects.

Savage attended many of those classes. On 17 July 1915 he wrote an essay of ten pages on the topic 'The Cost of Living and the Minimum Wage'. The essay, which was possibly marked by Grossman, who was taking the economics classes at the Leys Institute about that time, received a mark of ninety-five per cent.[10]

In the essay Savage examined three questions related to rising prices in English-speaking countries. He asked whether the cost of production had increased; whether competition was sufficient to enable the law of supply and demand to operate or whether monopolies fixed prices; and whether the methods used for exchanging commodities were responsible

for price increases. He concluded that new inventions and scientific methods in the productive process had lowered, not raised, the cost of production. He further concluded that, although there had developed a 'natural tendency . . . in direction of eliminating competition' and that 'prices will be as high as the traffic will bear', that had 'only in a very small degree, accounted for the gradual increase in the cost of living, extending over a great number of years'.

The bulk of Savage's essay, therefore, was devoted to the third factor, 'the medium of exchange'. Savage commenced by suggesting that currency and credit should not be tied to gold, the supply of which fluctuated, causing artificial movements in the availability and cost of credit and the level of prices. Instead, the amount of currency and credit should 'rise with the continued increase in the substance of which all forms of credit are but the shadow'. Savage went on to quote Professor Ashley and Sir Edward Holden in support of the view that demand and production could be stimulated by banks making more credit available on easier terms and contended that such an increase in demand, if not accompanied by increased production, would lead invariably to a rise in prices.

Savage then argued that it was impossible for New Zealand prices to remain for any length of time different from those established by the international exchange of commodities, although 'during the war period, maximum prices might, and ought, to be fixed; but to try the experiment in normal times would be to attempt the impossible. . . . any lowering of the rate of profit in New Zealand—and that is where state regulation of prices would end—would simply mean an outflow of capital'.

Although in the longer term 'public ownership seems to be the only cure in sight', Savage argued that the situation could be ameliorated immediately by the fixing of minimum wages to prevent the cost of living rising faster than incomes. In times of rising prices, Savage believed that the lowest paid, unskilled worker was the worst loser.

In support of his views, Savage quoted Irving Fisher,[11] Professor of Political Economy at Yale University, writing in the *Review of Reviews* in February 1910. Savage accepted one of Fisher's major theories, that during inflation the value of money falls, increasing the real cost of goods and transferring values from creditors to debtors. In times of deflation the reverse took place. Savage concluded that in New Zealand the purchasing power of money had lost its value over the previous twenty years because nominal wages had risen only half as fast as prices.

Savage was to remain a student of Fisher. He read many of Fisher's twenty-nine books and numerous articles and a quarter of a century later was still discussing them with the New Zealand brewery magnate and monetary reformer Henry Kelliher. Fisher, whose main concern was to stabilise the money system, believed that money had no power to satisfy human needs except the power to purchase the goods and services that did meet those needs. Its only value was as a means of exchange. He argued

that the value, availability, speed of circulation and interest rates of money and credit were dependent on many considerations that were not strictly economic. In particular, access to and control of the means of exchange affected directly and profoundly the level of prices and the distribution of wealth. Fisher and Savage, therefore, both believed that the state alone should have the right to issue money and regulate its value and to control credit through a government-directed banking system.

The writings of Fisher reinforced Savage's belief, derived from his earlier reading of George, Bellamy, Marx and others, that although goods were being produced more efficiently, more plentifully, and more cheaply than at any time in history, neither prices nor general availability reflected that fact. Gross under-consumption, economic deprivation and social misery still existed in the midst of plenty because the means of distribution and exchange were unsatisfactory. Savage accepted the desirability of the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange but came more and more to see government control of the means of exchange as the most important immediate method of solving the related problems of production and distribution.

Savage had always supported strongly the idea of a socialist and Labour newspaper as a means of educating and mobilising Labour's supporters. During 1915 he suggested the appointment of a paid canvasser to go door to door throughout Auckland seeking new subscribers for the *Maoriland Worker*.[12] At a public meeting Savage asked his audience to join him in guaranteeing the canvasser's wages. As a result, a *Worker* Press Club was formed in Auckland and Parry was appointed as the *Worker*'s agent with an office in the Trades Hall.

The New Zealand public's growing preoccupation with the war, however, soon began to hinder the educative and propaganda work of the SDP and LRC in Auckland. Savage complained to Fraser that 'We have been hampered to some extent owing [to] the prevailing epidemic – Jingoism'.[13] But within months the socialists had an emotional issue on which they and many of the more numerous non-socialist unionists and middle-class liberals could find common ground. On 25 April 1915 the New Zealand Expeditionary Force landed at Gallipoli. After ten weeks of fighting, the original force of 8534 men had suffered 4250 casualties. The awful reality of the nightmare that was to last four years became evident to New Zealand. It also became obvious that the New Zealand Government's pledge to despatch 1800 reinforcements every two months until the end of the war would have to be revised upward and that voluntary recruitment might have to be replaced by wartime conscription.

On 25 August 1915 a National Registration Bill was introduced into Parliament. All men between the ages of seventeen and sixty had to provide personal information about themselves. Those aged between nineteen and forty-five were required to indicate whether they were willing to serve overseas. The move was seen as a first step towards conscription and,

significantly, only fifty-eight per cent of the men who replied indicated willingness to join the Expeditionary Force if required.

The UF of L and SDP decided to oppose conscription of men for the armed forces and proclaimed that they would not even consider it until the government moved to control prices, pay decent incomes to soldiers and their dependants, and introduce a confiscatory tax on war profits.

Savage had for a number of years prior to the war frequently spoken out against militarism and compulsory military training.[14] On the outbreak of war he and Fraser had addressed a large meeting in the Globe Theatre on 'The Working Class Movement and the War'.[15] Early in the war he advocated state control of all staple foodstuffs and action to prevent price rises.[16] Savage now lent his voice to the anti-conscription campaign, arguing that there should be 'the nationalisation of industry before the nationalisation of flesh and blood'.[17] At two meetings held in the Globe Theatre in June 1916, each attended by over 3000 people, Savage spoke against the Military Service Bill before Parliament, the passage of which would introduce conscription. He moved a motion, passed unanimously,

> That this meeting of Auckland citizens, failing to see how Prussian Militarism can be crushed by the introduction of similar principles into New Zealand, condemns the Military Service Bill now before Parliament, deplores the action of the National Government in its distinct breach of faith with the approximately 60,000 New Zealanders who have enrolled under the voluntary system, and calls upon the people of the Dominion to resist this last act of tyranny at every stage.[18]

The following month Savage chaired another meeting, this time in the Lyric Theatre, where Adela Pankhurst spoke against the war to an audience of 1400.[19]

The protests were in vain. The Military Service Act became law. Conscription was introduced. On 4 December 1916 war regulations were published declaring seditious opposition to conscription. By the end of the month almost half Labour's most effective platform speakers, including Fraser, Semple, Thorn and Armstrong, were in prison.

Others were drawn in conscription ballots and called up for military service. Savage's old friend Webb, the bachelor MP for Grey, refused to comply, was court-martialled, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment with hard labour. Subsequently, he forfeited his seat in Parliament by being absent without leave. To the government's horror, the by-election in May 1918 was won by Holland.

Another of Savage's friends, Heffron, who had succeeded Savage as secretary of the Auckland LRC when Savage became its president in 1917, was also drawn in a ballot. Heffron, who later became Premier of New South Wales, evaded the authorities and was smuggled across the Tasman to Australia in the coal bunker of a ship.[20]

Savage himself was called up for medical examination after being drawn in the tenth conscription ballot on 1 September 1917. He was classified subsequently as C2, or fit for home service only, on the grounds of being over the maximum age for military service. Although he was forty-five when conscripted, within a few months he turned forty-six, which exempted him from conscription. Savage's military record stated that he would not be called up for re-examination and would continue on leave without pay until further orders.[21]

The anti-conscription campaign partly revived the SDP's flagging spirit and support. It also led to increased demands for Labour to unify itself to maximise its opposition to the government and conscription; to strengthen its ability to defend the interests of the working class; and, from the point of view of some socialists such as Holland, to prepare a united, socialist-led, working-class movement to take over power after the end of the war when capitalism collapsed internationally.

In August 1915 the Reform and Liberal Parties had formed a coalition National Government with Massey as Prime Minister and Ward as Minister of Finance. Five of the six Labour MPs decided to form a caucus under the chairmanship of the Wellington lawyer and MP Alfred Hindmarsh, and became the opposition.

Outside Parliament the SDP, the UF of L, the LRCs, which were now the dominant political Labour bodies in Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin, various unions and trades councils, and even some of the remnants of the ULP, were advocating a formal unification of Labour's independent political activity. The result was a conference in Wellington in July 1916 at which the New Zealand Labour Party was created officially. It had a socialist objective and accepted the LRC as the basic unit of organisation. The SDP, some of its leaders hoped, would affiliate to the Labour Party through the LRCs but would also retain a separate identity as a propaganda and educative organisation.

Certainly, Savage was carrying on the propaganda war in Auckland. He addressed meetings in Quay Street and in the Globe Theatre not only on the war and conscription but also opposing the suspension of Arbitration Court awards and agreements; on the political situation in Australia; and on taxation. He undertook to organise the enrolment of voters; chaired meetings for visiting speakers such as Holland, who spoke on Ireland; raised money to replace the machinery to print the *Worker*; helped form new branches of the NZLP in Auckland Central, West and East, Grey Lynn and Parnell; and canvassed numerous unions and other organisations such as the Women's International League seeking to persuade them to join the LRC. He also visited Labour leaders imprisoned in Mount Eden gaol and, when James Thorn was released, met Thorn and, after the large crowd had sung 'The Red Flag', 'paid a glowing tribute to Mr Thorn and his fellow political prisoners, who had courageously placed their principles before their own personal liberty'.[22] Throughout

this troubled period Savage optimistically signed his correspondence 'Keep believing. Savage'.

Although Savage devoted most of his spare time to politics, he did not neglect union activities. He was the leader of the Brewery Workers' Union's assessors in wage negotiations, which in 1916 raised the minimum wage by 1s. per day, increased the number of paid holidays a year from seven to eight, established overtime rates of pay up to time and a half, and obtained a war bonus of 5s. per week to cover the increase in the cost of living.[23]

Savage and his Brewery Workers' Union had also been among the seven Auckland unions that, shortly after the outbreak of the war, had formed an Auckland District Council of the UF of L with Heffron as its secretary.

In July 1917 Savage represented the Auckland Brewery Workers' Union at the UF of L conference in Wellington. He moved a motion of appreciation to those helping the families of the men imprisoned for opposing the war and conscription. He unsuccessfully moved a series of motions to change the rules of the UF of L to encourage the linking of all kindred trades in one union and to secure uniformity in union rules, membership cards and working conditions. He wanted the unions to support weekly Labour newspapers and encourage their members to attend WEA classes in economics. And he advocated the fostering of producer and consumer co-operatives.[24]

Representing the Auckland LRC, Savage also attended the 1917 annual conference of the NZLP. There he moved that the New Zealand Government be asked to follow the example of the British and Russian Governments in releasing political prisoners. He spoke in favour of Holland's proposal to place state control as an alternative to prohibition or continuance on the liquor referendum ballot. He moved and Holland seconded a motion to restrict the power of the NZLP's national executive by forcing it to submit to a ballot of affiliated organisations any of its decisions that were opposed by two or more LRCs. He urged the commandeering by the state of all food, which would then be retailed at pre-war prices. And he attacked the government's proposed National Efficiency Board, which Savage claimed 'was only an instrument for oiling the machinery of industrial conscription'.[25]

Savage, whose status in the new party was recognised by his presence as a speaker at the public rally held in conjunction with the conference, also addressed the 1917 NZLP conference on a subject to which he was to return many times over the next few years. He advocated Labour Party support for the creation of one big Australasian industrial union, with a universal, interchangeable membership ticket, which would replace the 'sorry farce' of New Zealand's trade union sectionalism. Savage believed that the 'AWU was destined to become the economic foundation of the political expression of Labour' in both Australia and New Zealand.

In 1916 Savage and the French family moved to Paget Street. Aruba, by then about eleven years old, remembered that she had started learning the piano when she was five but as the years went on she liked practising less and less. Savage offered her £5, a very large sum of money at that time, if she learned to play an Irish jig for him to dance to, and another £5 for every music exam she passed. That was typical of the encouragement Savage gave Aruba and her brother, who became a schoolteacher, to study and also reflected Savage's love of music. Neighbours and friends often came to the French home for musical evenings at which Savage invariably tapdanced. Other children in the neighbourhood also in later years remembered with affection the kindly man who gave them bread and honey and told them stories of Australian bushrangers.[26]

Occasionally, Savage would play a game of crib and he sometimes helped Alf French, a keen gardener, with the gardening. But Savage's major free-time activity was reading. The books, according to Aruba, were always on economics, politics or history, and to a young girl seemed very difficult and boring. In time several rooms in the house were taken up with Savage's bookshelves and books as he went from a single-room bed-sitter, into which he crammed all his worldly possessions, to a separate study for his desk, typewriter and books.

Savage was an ideal lodger, who often heralded his return home in the evening by tapdancing a few steps on the back doorstep. He retired early to bed, rose early in the morning, was always even-tempered, and was very considerate about the welfare of the others in the family. On one occasion Alf French had an accident that left him with a badly poisoned arm, which had to be bathed frequently, and a high fever. Mrs French cared for her husband during the days and Savage sat up throughout the nights nursing his sick friend. Savage himself was rarely ever ill, although he sometimes suffered from severe migraine headaches. He had almost no fads when it came to food, but enjoyed a good, wholesome dinner such as a weekend roast. He was always willing to have a cup of tea, fancied fruit cake, occasionally drank beer, and was partial to whisky with milk. On Friday shopping nights Mrs French and Aruba brought home for supper pigs' trotters, which were a favourite of both men.

On Sundays in summer, after the children returned from the Church of England Sunday School, Savage and the French family frequently went on picnics to places such as Waiheke Island. In winter Sunday nights were usually spent at a concert or political meeting in the city.

Savage and the French family went to the races every Boxing and New Year's Day. Aruba remembered asking Savage what the letters 'BF' on a horse cover meant. Savage, who loved watching horses but never bet, dryly replied, 'That's the feller who backs him—a BF'.

Although Alf French did not become too involved in politics, he and Mrs French often attended political meetings with Savage, and Alf and later his daughter, Aruba, sometimes went out canvassing and delivering

pamphlets with him. Aruba many years later remembered how nasty some people were to them and how hard it was to canvass for Labour in those early days.

At one time Savage and Alf French considered starting a grocery business together but were convinced by others in the family that they were so generous in giving money and possessions away to those they regarded as less fortunate than themselves that they would go bankrupt.

The two men enjoyed talking together, though Alf did most of the talking and Savage the listening. French often recounted stories from his past but, apart from the rare cryptic comment about having 'lived in a log' in Australia, Savage avoided recollections about his early life. He lived in the present and talked about the future. To him the past was gone, though it could never be forgotten. Savage was not interested in moping over what might have been. He would rather be thinking about and working for what ought to be. On the few occasions when he did become depressed he quickly snapped himself out of it, often by jumping up and doing a little jig. Alf French remembered how 'I used to sit down and play an Irish jig while he danced, I used to take down the flute when things would be going a bit contrary and I usually got him up to foot it'.[27]

In August 1918 a congress in Sydney, attended by representatives of 130 unions, decided to reassert the IWW class struggle preamble and try to create one 'Workers' Industrial Union of Australia' to encompass all Australian unionists. For some time prior to that date Savage, who was a national executive member of the UF of L, had been propounding the merits of one big union to which all New Zealand workers would belong. Indeed, he appeared also to accept the possibility that one union could be established to cover both Australian and New Zealand workers.

In July 1918 Savage had been the only nomination for a delegate to represent the Auckland combined trade unions at a congress to be held following the annual UF of L conference in Wellington.[28] He also represented the brewery workers at both meetings.

At the UF of L conference Savage quickly identified himself as one of the leaders of the anti-Arbitration Court faction. He again advocated one universal union ticket transferable among unions but was ruled out of order by the conference chairman, Ted Howard, of Christchurch. Savage then attempted unsuccessfully to persuade the conference to frame an alternative industrial system to the Arbitration Court, though he did move successfully a motion that industrial awards should be binding on all parties. He also supported better organisation of women workers, called for protests throughout New Zealand at the ill-treatment of conscientious objectors, and was one of five speakers at a crowded Labour rally.

The major debate took place over the government's proposed amendment of clause 23 of the Finance Act of 1918, a move that had led to fears that the government intended to control employment and

transfer workers from one industry to another. Although Savage pressed the UF of L conference to discuss the matter of industrial conscription and particularly alternatives to it, most delegates agreed with J. T. Paul's suggestion that the matter should be left until the open conference of unions, which would follow the UF of L conference and would be attended by representatives of unions not affiliated to the UF of L.

The national, open congress of trade unions to oppose industrial conscription was attended by representatives of some 200 unions and had been called by fifty Auckland unions from whom Savage had been chosen as spokesman. Savage advocated the complete rejection of industrial conscription and also called for public ownership and control of industry as an alternative. His views were opposed by a number of other union leaders including Fred Cooke of the Christchurch Tailoring Union, Jim Roberts, the secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federation, and Charlie Grayndler of the Shearers' Union. They persuaded the conference to delete from the motion moved by Savage all reference to public ownership and control.

As a compromise, a committee of eight chaired by Savage was then established to draft specific proposals to oppose the conscription of labour and report back to the conference. Savage's committee, returning to the views originally expressed by Savage, recommended that, ideally, the state should nationalise industries and entrust their management to the trade unions; that until that happened there should be two national industrial organisations, one for employers and one for employees, in each industry, not each trade; that a National Industrial Council should be elected consisting of one representative of the employers and one of the employees from each industrial district, such a council acting as an industrial parliament and court of appeal; and that in each industrial district or town advisory committees of three employers' representatives and three employees' representatives should be set up to regulate wages, supervise working conditions, prevent unemployment, employ partially disabled soldiers, oversee technical training, research and apprenticeships, and establish committees of inquiry into specific problems.

Speaking to the report, Savage took the opportunity to attack both government control of labour and the profiteering that arose from the private ownership of the means of production. He criticised the government's payment of interest on credit that really belonged to the state, representing all the people, and not to the banks who were using the public credit for private gain. He advocated confiscation of all community-created land values and all incomes above £300 per annum as an alternative to funding the war through loans. The report was adopted by 40 votes to 18 and referred back to the UF of L for action.

Savage went straight from the two trade union conferences to the 1918 annual conference of the NZLP. At no previous time in his life had Savage appeared to be so loquacious in expressing his views. Representing

the Auckland Labourers' Union, the Auckland Women's International League, and the Auckland LRC, which by then encompassed thirty organisations and some 3500 members in the twenty electorates from Bay of Islands in the north to Tauranga and Rotorua in the south, Savage dominated the NZLP conference as he had the earlier industrial ones.

Not all Savage's suggestions of constitutional and organisational reform were accepted. He failed to replace LRCs with district councils; to rotate the national executive around the LRCs, thus preventing the geographic centralisation of the party; and to have the national executive given the right to endorse local body as well as parliamentary candidates. He succeeded in preventing the formation of new LRCs in electorates or districts already covered by an LRC; in setting up a committee of five, chaired by himself, to examine party organisation; in giving control of election organisation and candidate nomination to district councils; and in pooling conference delegates' expenses to subsidise the travel costs of those coming the furthest distance. Savage also moved successfully, despite opposition from Holland, that MPs should place their services 'unreservedly in the hand of the National Executive' when Parliament was not sitting so that they could be used to help other candidates.

When Savage's organisation committee reported back later in the conference it recommended the division of all electorates in New Zealand among LRCs, created a standing national committee on organisation, and made proposals concerning fundraising and propaganda. Although one member of the committee challenged Savage on the grounds that he thought the report contained matters not discussed by the committee, that was denied by Savage and the report was adopted unanimously.

Savage continued to take a leading role in other major debates at the conference. He spoke in favour of candidates being selected by the votes of all members living with an LRC area, not just those in the electorate concerned, as 'the most logical and democratic method of selection'. Although Paul wanted only members living in an electorate to select the candidate, Savage's views prevailed and the remit was carried.

Savage also supported the immediate establishment of a state bank; moved that the party's platform be amended by the addition of 'perfect equality between the sexes in every department of public life'; spoke in favour of citizenship being included in the school curriculum; moved successfully that pensions should be made reciprocal throughout the Empire; advocated the abolition of capital punishment; and argued that the government should legislate so that women should not be deprived of their nationality or right to seek naturalisation because of marriage to aliens. On a number of these matters Savage spoke as the representative of the Auckland Women's International League.

The most controversial and divisive debate at the 1918 conference was over the liquor issue. Prohibition in New Zealand during the first two decades of the century was nearly carried on several occasions. At

the 1902, 1905, 1908 and 1911 polls prohibition received over half the vote but was defeated because of a requirement that it receive sixty per cent or more. But a local option provision meant that many areas did become 'dry', no-licence districts. At the 1908 liquor poll, for example, the brewery and hotel firm owned by Moss Davis lost, without compensation, fourteen licensed hotels in Auckland.[29] The tremendous financial loss shattered Davis's health but his two sons, Savage's employers, started to make friends with politicians across the political spectrum and over the following decades were to channel many hundreds of thousands of pounds into the election funds of all political parties and into licensing campaigns. Ernest Davis contributed to the Labour Party, Eliot Davis to the Reform Party, and another Auckland brewer and Liberal MP, Arthur Myers, financed the Liberals. In time, according to the Davis family, the liquor trade gained some very strong friends in Parliament, notably the Reformer Gordon Coates. Savage, a moderate drinker and brewery workers' leader, was a consistent opponent of prohibition but he also disliked the excessive consumption of alcohol and the squalid conditions in which it was often consumed.

Following the 1917 NZLP conference, which had agreed to support the addition of state control to the liquor referendum ballot, the party's president, James McCombs, MP for Lyttelton and a leader of the prohibition cause, resigned from both the presidency and the Labour caucus. The vice-president, Andrew Walker, MP for Dunedin North and a staunch Baptist teetotaller, became president on McCombs' departure but also resigned the position within a few days for the same reason. Throughout all levels of the party its newfound and still fragile unity was seriously threatened.

At the 1918 conference Savage made it plain that the Labour Party did not endorse state control but merely a choice of three rather than two options on the liquor question.[30] Supported by Holland but opposed by the new president, Paul, and the parliamentary caucus chairman, Hindmarsh, Savage successfully moved that the NZLP continue to support three options on the ballot paper. He then proposed that the vote should be by a preferential system so that any option would need a majority to be carried. Thus no-one would be able to argue that the move was an attempt to split either the prohibition or the continuance votes. Savage explained that state control, if carried nationally, would involve the state being responsible for the manufacture and import of alcoholic beverages and that, subject to local licensing polls, municipal bodies would control the retail sale of liquor. Savage further moved that if state control were carried, compensation would be paid only for the capital value of the breweries and hotels without goodwill and would be funded by future sales of liquor on a time payment basis. Compensation for prohibition would come from a tax on land values. Holland and Semple opposed any reference by the conference to compensation, and Savage's proposals on

that matter were deleted from the motion by amendment.

Nevertheless, Savage proceeded to move that the conference adopt a lengthy declaration on the liquor issue, noting that the Labour Party was 'essentially a temperance movement' that wanted to abolish all harmful influences including alcohol. But he believed that 'the drink evil is a disease born of capitalism'. To tired, worried workers, 'alcoholic liquor provides the sufferers with an easy access to a temporary substitute for their ever-lessening vitality'. Savage went on to attack the degrading conditions in which liquor was sold and consumed and the evils of excessive drinking. He claimed that they grew out of the combination of a 'craving for alcohol' among the victims of an inhuman society and the unprincipled private liquor interests concerned solely with exploiting the demand to make profits.

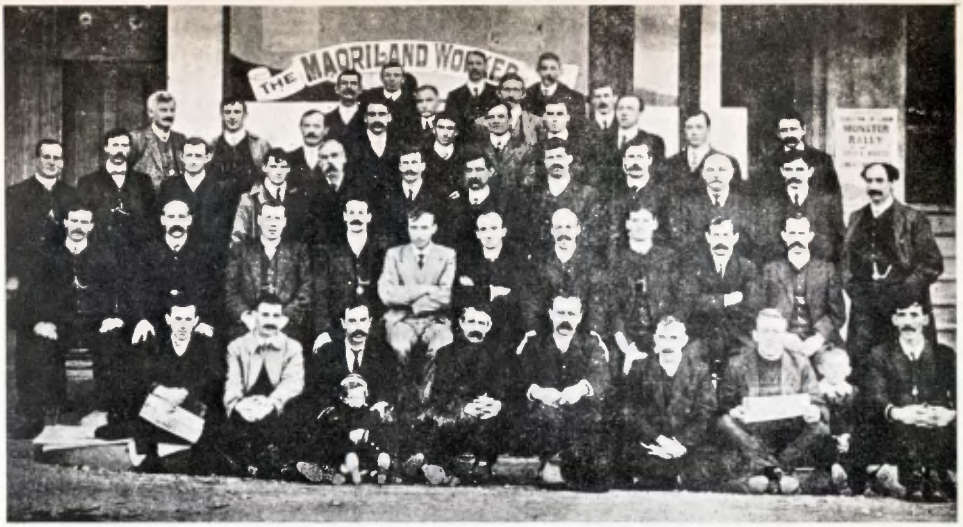
In the months following the 1918 conference Savage, who had been elected vice-president of the NZLP, worked with Paul to persuade McCombs to return to the caucus. Savage argued that the NZLP was 'neither a Prohibition Party nor a Liquor Party' but one that allowed the people of New Zealand to choose democratically among the alternatives. Each member of the party would be free, inside or outside Parliament, to follow his or her conscience on the matter.

While the LRCs, in most cases unanimously, endorsed the position as outlined by Savage, some members of the national executive, including Holland, Semple and the national secretary, John Glover, expressed their opposition to any compromise and to the apparent concessions being made to prohibitionists such as McCombs. Their criticism provoked a verbal broadside from Savage, who told Paul that the

> jellyfish action of some members of the executive is all moonshine. If ever anyone has displayed their unfitness for Executive office these members have. . . . If the National Secretary insists upon taking his instructions from the Wellington Advisory Committee instead of from the National Executive we should arrange for the services of some one who will do the work. . . . Let me remind you again that we should insist upon this being carried out, as long as we have a majority.[31]

The Paul-Savage compromise over the liquor issue ended fifteen months of bitter division within the NZLP and restored McCombs to Labour's ranks. It is perhaps not coincidental in the light of Savage's comments about the national secretary that at the party's next annual conference Savage replaced Glover in that post.

The rejoicing at the end of the war in November 1918 was muted not only by the tremendous cost of victory in New Zealand lives lost but also by the horror and grief caused by the worldwide epidemic of virulent influenza, which had hit Auckland in October 1918.[32] For the last three months of the year it raged throughout the city. The worst hit areas were the poorer housing districts in the central city and Ponsonby where Savage lived. The disease was very infectious. Headaches and body pains were

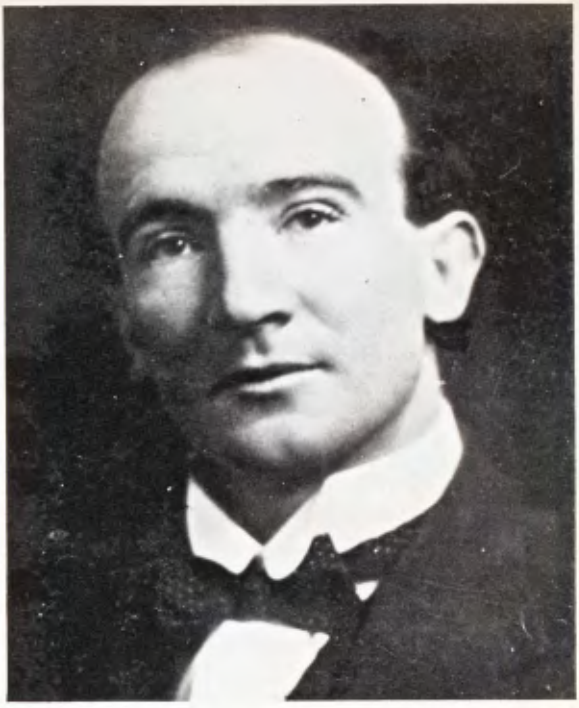


The 'Red Feds' ' conference 1912 with Savage, Armstrong, Semple, Parry, Webb, Fagan and Fraser, who were all in the first Labour Cabinet of 1935, present. Other prominent figures shown include Howard, Hickey and Roberts

'Sentenced to Life!' A *Social Democrat* cartoon, 25 August 1911, indicating some of the socialists' and syndicalists' emotional propaganda. *Hocken Library*

Savage addressing a crowd estimated at 12 000 in front of the Grey Statue and the Auckland Town Hall during the 1912 Waihi miners' strike. *Auckland Institute and Museum*

SDP conference, 1914. Savage is standing at the left-hand end of the second row. *Alexander Turnbull Library*



Paddy Webb, who was imprisoned for two years and was disqualified from Parliament for refusing to be conscripted into the army. *Alexander Turnbull Library*

Alf and Elizabeth French, with whom Savage lived for thirty-three years. *Mrs Aruba Alfrey*

Savage (right) and Alf French in their Salisbury Street garden with a flowering yucca tree. *Mrs Aruba Alfrey*

Auckland LRC ball, 3 October 1918. Savage is standing seventh from the left. Parry is seated fourth from the right in the second row. Note Seddon's photo on the wall and the posters, which read 'Internationalism' and 'Not for a Race but for Mankind'. *University of Auckland Library*

Savage's 1919 election card

M. J. SAVAGE.

City Councillor, and Member Hospital and Charitable Aid Board, Auckland and Suburban Drainage Board.

Selected Labour Candidate for Auckland West.

GENERAL ELECTIONS, 1919.

To the Electors of Auckland West.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I beg to announce that I have been selected by the New Zealand Labour Party to solicit your suffrages at the forthcoming elections. My qualification to fulfil the task of representing the mental and manual workers in the Parliament of the Dominion is due to my experiences in office, mine, field, and workshop, covering a period of more than 30 years, and to my association with the Labour movement for a quarter of a century.

During the course of my rather strenuous career in the Labour movement, I have been entrusted by my fellow workers with every position of trust known to the movement outside of Parliament, until to-day, when I hold the position of National Secretary to the Party responsible for my nomination in this constituency.

At an early date I shall take the opportunity of fully explaining the Party's Platform, to which I am pledged, and shall be pleased to meet friends and opponents alike, in a spirit worthy of the great movement which I have the honour to represent.

Yours faithfully,

M. J. Savage

followed by fever, nausea, diarrhoea, coughing, pneumonia, weakness, delirium and, in many cases, death. About seventy per cent of New Zealand's population caught the flu; six and a half thousand, including Labour's parliamentary leader, Hindmarsh, died.

Shops, churches, schools and hotels were closed, temporary hospitals were opened in schools and at race-courses, and citizens' committees were set up to help people in their own homes. The UF of L, the WEA and the LRC were among the organisations actively involved in Auckland. Savage led a deputation of trade union representatives to the mayor to press for steps to prevent the spread of the disease throughout the city.[33] He and Alf French came home from work, had their tea, and night after night with their friends Bloodworth and Parry went out scrubbing halls and schools used as hospitals or clinics, or located and helped the sick in their homes.[34] On some occasions the visitors found whole families, men, women and little children, sick, dying or dead in their beds or on the floors of those homes.[35] Late at night Savage and French returned home for a regular dose of whisky and milk, which they hoped would help ward off the flu.

Savage's efforts during the influenza epidemic did not go unnoticed in the wider community and were to be remembered and commended by the *Auckland Star*'s editor when Savage stood for the Auckland City Council a few months later.[36]

The Auckland LRC organised early and well for the April 1919 local body elections. In February Labour announced a radical, ten-point municipal platform, which included the unification of all civic bodies in Auckland into a single municipal government elected by proportional representation on the parliamentary franchise; the development of municipal trading in milk, fish, lighting, tramways and ferries; the use of a municipal works department instead of private contractors; the clearing of slums and erection of workers' homes; the provision of municipal creches; an unimproved land-value rating system; and the opening of all committee meetings to the public.[37]

Five Labour candidates for the Auckland City Council, including Savage, were supported by the *Auckland Star*. The weekly newspaper *Truth* also supported the Labour ticket and policy. At the election on 30 April 1919, from a field of fifty candidates, three Labour nominees—Savage, Bloodworth and George Davis, secretary of the Drivers' Union—were elected to the council along with seventeen anti-Labour councillors and one independent, Savage's employer, Ernest Davis. Savage was also Labour's sole success for the five city seats on the Auckland Hospital and Charitable Aid Board, although Dr Keller, originally elected as a Labour nominee, was returned as an independent.

At the first meeting of the city council, Savage was appointed to its powerful and prestigious Finance and Legal Committee and to the Leys Institute Committee.[38] The appointment to the council's most important

and desirable committee of a first-term councillor, without legal or accounting expertise, who had polled thirteenth out of twenty-one successful candidates, and who was one of a minority of three councillors representing the far from respectable Labour Party, was curious. The other members of the committee were James Gunson, the mayor who nominated the committees, and four sitting councillors all of whom were in at least their third term on the council and all of whom had been at or near the top of the poll. Perhaps Gunson's and Savage's mutual friend Ernie Davis, who was not on the committee, had something to do with Savage's selection. Perhaps Gunson felt that the three Labour members were entitled to one place and chose Savage as the most able.

When the hospital board made its committee appointments Savage found himself on three of its five committees: those concerned with the granting of charitable aid, with hospital inspections, and with the Costley Home, a geriatric home and hospital that was later renamed Green Lane Hospital.[39]

Savage's election to the council, the hospital board, and their various committees greatly increased the number of meetings he had to attend each month. The council met at least fortnightly and sometimes weekly on Thursday nights at 7 p.m. and there were several committee meetings each month also. The hospital board met monthly, also at 7 p.m., and sometimes fortnightly when business demanded. In addition to regular committee meetings and hospital visiting, Savage, as a member of the Charitable Aid Committee, spent long hours interviewing a sorry sequence of destitute people and deciding how to allocate the board's meagre funds to pay the rent, rations or medical expenses of those in Auckland who lacked the minimum means of survival because they were old, sick, widowed, orphaned, deserted, unemployed or recently released from prison.

Success at the local body elections did not lead to a reduction in Savage's other political activities. He was still national vice-president of the NZLP and once again secretary of the Auckland LRC. In the latter capacity, as soon as the municipal elections were concluded, Savage organised the selection of Auckland candidates for parliamentary elections later that year.[40] He had earlier made it plain that he believed that candidates should make themselves available to stand for the party in any seat. Those who did not get a desirable seat should be prepared to stand elsewhere. Only after a poll of all members in the region had chosen the best people should they be allocated specific seats. Nominations were called from branches and affiliated unions. All the twenty-three names received were placed on a ballot paper and eight candidates were chosen. Over a three-day period, 6–8 June, every financial member of the party in the eight Auckland electorates was entitled to vote by preferential ballot. The names of the eight successful candidates were then placed in a hat, drawn out, and allocated sequentially to one of the eight seats listed in

the order Labour thought they could be won. Fortune smiled on Savage, who drew the first and most desirable seat, Auckland West, which was also the seat in which he lived. His friend Parry was drawn for the second seat, Auckland Central, which Savage had contested in 1911 and 1914. Had Savage not drawn one of the three seats Labour was to win at the 1919 election, his life might well have followed a different path from that point. Luck is sometimes more important than ambition or ability in politics.

In July 1919 Savage again represented the Auckland LRC at the NZLP conference in Wellington.[41] He renominated the moderate Paul for president but stood down as vice-president, Fraser being elected as his successor. The vice-presidential election took place after a long debate about the possible appointment of a full-time secretary. Holland wanted Fraser for the post but Savage expressed his concern not only about the LRCs having to find another £500 just before an election but also that the position was to be filled before remits relevant to the organisation of the party had been dealt with. He tried unsuccessfully to delay the elections and also questioned the supposition that the secretary had to be located in Wellington or anywhere else, asserting that 'a live man in Invercargill was better than a dead man in Auckland'.[42] The national office of the party should be located where the new secretary lived.

Three people were finally nominated for the party's first permanent national secretary: Savage, Walter Nash and Tom Brindle. Mark Silverstone of Dunedin was mentioned but not formally proposed. Nash declined and Brindle withdrew in favour of Savage, whose election was confirmed unanimously. Savage replied that 'he had never dreamt that he would leave the Conference as National Secretary' but promised to do his best.[43]

Savage was certainly very active at the 1919 conference. He tried unsuccessfully to keep annual conferences small and made up of representatives of LRCs rather than delegates from all affiliated bodies. Specifically he believed that women were 'quite able and willing to look after themselves without any special privileges'.[44] Women and members of specific unions and branches could be LRC delegates and the fact that the previous year Auckland women had chosen to send Savage rather than one of their own to the conference as their delegate did not, Savage contended, suggest that they believed 'that only women could represent women'. On this issue Savage was in the minority and, by a vote of 11–10, conference representation was widened to include in future delegates directly from affiliations.

Savage was also unsuccessful when he moved that the Labour Party support the establishment of 'Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils' throughout New Zealand to deal with repatriation problems. He also lost a clash with Holland over the latter's proposal to bar from Labour candidacy people who had opposed Labour candidates prior to the

formation of the NZLP in 1916. Savage believed the prohibition should apply only to those who had done so since 1916.

On three matters—land, defence and immigration—Savage moved that committees be set up to report back later in the conference. Although Savage was one of the seven members of the land policy committee, whose report was presented by Paul, supported by Fraser and Holland, and adopted unanimously, Savage did not speak to it. That was surprising because of his interest in the subject, his membership of the committee, and the fact that he spoke on most other topics raised at the conference. In later years Savage was to become increasingly critical of this part of Labour's policy and it is possible that from the first he entertained reservations about it.

The land report revived the old leasehold-freehold issue in a new form and introduced fears of wholesale land nationalisation.[45] It was to become a major source of controversy not only within New Zealand generally but also within the NZLP itself during the 1920s. Labour was not to learn for another fifteen years that the way to solicit farmers' votes was through a policy of plentiful and cheap credit, not by threatening freehold ownership.

Savage did take part in the debate on immigration, which was in response to remits seeking to restrict the immigration of indentured workers from India and China to work in New Zealand coal mines and on New Zealand ships and wharves.[46] There was a strong tradition of racism, especially against Asians, in the Australian and New Zealand Labour movements. Opposition to racism had come largely from the Auckland socialists led by Scott Bennett, who consistently opposed any doctrine of racial purity that negated the concept of the brotherhood of man.[47] At the 1919 conference Holland, Fraser and Armstrong all expressed their concern about Europeans having to live with Asians. Parry replied that Indians were good unionists and perfectly clean and that 'Nothing in the nature of race or colour prejudice should be countenanced by Labour'. Savage then spoke at length and with considerable ambivalence. He accepted that Asian immigration to New Zealand was a serious problem and that racism went much deeper than economics. Showing an awareness of the intellectual theories of biological and anthropological racism that had come out of France in the late nineteenth century and arisen from Darwinism, Savage said that although 'he had given some study to the matter . . . he confessed the material at his disposal did not enable him to form very decided opinions on the matter'. Of one thing he was sure, however—that educational tests were a farce.

On another matter Savage did have 'very decided opinions'. He wanted the means test removed from all pensions, which he argued should be universally obtainable as a right of citizenship and not because of the penury of the recipient. This was to be a recurring theme in his speeches over the following twenty years.

In the months leading up to the 1919 election there were serious differences of opinion within the party over both the number of seats to be contested and the eligibility of potential candidates. Paul and others in the Labour leadership argued that Labour should not dissipate its energies, impact and resources by nominating weak candidates in hopeless seats. Paul told Savage that the Labour campaign should be 'concentrated on a fewer number of constituencies, where our chances are good'.[48] Ineffective Labour candidates would not only damage Labour's image but would result in the defeat of Liberal MPs by Reform candidates.

Savage was the major proponent of nominating as wide a spread of candidates as possible so that Labour would be seen as a viable national party and not a sectional appendage to the Liberals. Savage regarded Paul's wish to restrict the number of candidates as pessimistic and dangerous and the new national secretary attacked any suggestion of a Liberal-Labour electoral alliance or even consideration for the few remaining radicals among the Liberal MPs. The paramount, immediate objective in 1919, Savage insisted, was not the defeat of Reform but the establishment of an independent Labour Party, and he asserted:

> One thing is certain: If we give the slightest colour to the suggestion that Labour should stand down in the interests of Liberal candidates, disaster is sure to overtake us. . . . Liberals are at present occupying the very seats that rightly belong to Labour. One of the strongest factors in our favour will be the creation of a public feeling that Labour has a chance of being returned with the strongest party in the House. Anything less than that would give the impression—and rightly so—that we were beginning where we began in 1914.[49]

Savage's views prevailed; fifty-four Labour candidates were nominated, and there was no repetition of the earlier Liberal-Labour electoral alliance. He also threw his support behind various candidates whose selections were criticised or challenged on tendentious technicalities: A. H. Gregory in Kaipara, Rev. F. T. Broom in Waitomo, J. A. Brown and J. W. Munro in Dunedin.[50]

Throughout the 1919 election campaign Labour's opponents—the Reformers, the Liberals, an anti-Labour organisation called the New Zealand Welfare League, and the Protestant Political Association—attacked the Labour Party's alleged Bolshevik extremism. Labour's opponents were aided by some rather injudiciously emotive utterances by Semple, Fraser and Holland, who claimed that the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia was the finest moment in human history.[51]

While not lauding the Russian Revolution, Savage added to the public perception of Labour as a radical party by stating unequivocally that, in New Zealand,

> Labour's objective was the common ownership of the means of life. . . . Centralization was the trend of evolution. Inevitably there must be either monopoly under private ownership with despotic control, or monopoly

> under public ownership with democratic control. The Labour Party was out for the socialization of the means of production, distribution and exchange. It might take years to obtain that, but it was coming.[52]

Savage also proposed 'to throw open the land to the people on terms which would make it possible for them to work it . . . ownership should be based solely upon occupation. All community created values of land should be claimed by the state by taxation'.[53]

Savage was, however, not above presenting Labour as the legitimate descendant of the old Liberal Party, and was quite willing to sign a large newspaper advertisement portraying and quoting Seddon, with the added statement that Labour was 'pledged ONLY to the principles underlying the great statesman's remarks'.[54]

As national secretary, Savage helped design and signed most of Labour's advertisements and one, quoting the great American orator Robert Green Ingersoll, probably summed up Savage's own personal political philosophy. Labour was determined to

> give to every man the fruit of his own labour . . . the labour of his hand and of his brain; and would like to see this world, at last, so that a man could die and not feel that he left his wife and children a prey to the greed, the avarice, or the cruelties of mankind. There is something wrong in a government where they who do the most have the least. There is something wrong when honesty wears a rag, and rascality a robe; when the loving, the tender, eat a crust, while the infamous sit at banquets.[55]

In the Auckland West electorate Savage, who stressed throughout the campaign the desirability of nationalising the medical service,[56] faced two opponents. The Reformer, Charles Bennett, a land agent, was supported by the Protestant Political Association and fought a campaign based on patriotism and 'law and order'. The Liberal candidate, Andrew Entrican, was a prominent member of the Auckland Presbytery and earlier that year had easily topped the poll for the Auckland City Council for the third successive time.

Three weeks before polling day, 17 December 1919, a non-Labour newspaper observed that 'M. J. Savage is the official Labour candidate in Auckland West. Of all the Labour candidates contesting the Auckland seats, Joe's chance is the rosiest'.[57]

Paul's fears about the effect of the split vote proved well founded. Although the Reform Party only polled thirty-six per cent of the votes, it won forty-six seats, thirteen on minority votes. But Savage's hopes were also partly realised; the Liberals were devastated in the cities. Their vote dropped from forty-three to twenty-nine per cent; they lost eleven seats including that of their leader, Ward; and they were left with twenty MPs. Labour entered the election with five MPs, none of whom was in Auckland. In 1919 Labour took twenty-four per cent of the vote, lost two seats, gained five, and emerged with eight MPs, of whom three came from Auckland. Parry won Auckland Central, Bartram Grey Lynn, and

Savage, with 4008 votes to Bennett's 3475 and Entrican's 1493, had a majority of 633. He thus became, at the age of forty-seven, the MP for Auckland West, a seat which he was to hold until his death twenty-one years later.

VII
THE MEMBER FOR AUCKLAND WEST 1919–28

UNTIL THE JULY 1920 NZLP conference Savage was not only the MP for Auckland West and a member of both the Auckland City Council and the hospital board but he also continued to carry much of the party's administrative burden as national secretary and Auckland LRC secretary. His workload was lightened when Rev. Moses Ayrton relieved him of the national post and David Wilson became secretary of the LRC. The *Worker* observed some months later that 'Joe Savage was looking in fine fettle, he has lost that worried look he used to wear when he was national secretary, and also secretary of the Auckland LRC'.[1]

Although Savage's Auckland West branch had its own rooms at Three Lamps, the three new Labour MPs representing adjoining electorates also shared one large office with a reception room in central Auckland where they met constituents. Dressed nearly always in his dark, navy blue suit, little black bow tie, heavy-soled shoes, and smoking his cherrywood pipe, the quiet and reserved but compassionate new MP for Auckland West listened to the many Aucklanders who came to seek help with their problems.

In Wellington there was a stark contrast between the opulent conditions in which Savage and his colleagues worked and the almost squalid conditions in which they lived while attending sessions of Parliament. Savage's days and evenings were spent in the heavily carpeted, marble halls of Parliament Buildings, luxuriously furnished with leather couches and chairs and steeped in the pomp of parliamentary tradition and procedure.

But an MP on £8. 10*s*. a week, with two homes to maintain for part of the year and numerous constituency and charitable expenses, did not

find it easy to make ends meet. The real wage of an MP at that time was less than that paid to a general labourer,[2] and Savage's colleagues with families and no additional private incomes experienced real hardship. Little wonder that some literally lived in garages when in Wellington, although Savage and his friend Parry, who shared a room in Hill Street and had their meals at Bellamy's, the parliamentary dining-room, managed a little better than that.

The 1920 session of Parliament opened on 24 June. At a meeting of the eight Labour MPs held earlier that day, Savage, now clean-shaven after having removed the moustache he had worn for many years, queried whether everyone present had signed the party pledge. He then nominated Holland as chairman of the caucus.[3] Holland, with the support of Fraser and the three Aucklanders, won by 5 votes to 3 over McCombs, who was supported by his Christchurch colleagues Sullivan and Howard. Savage had some reservations about Holland's essentially negative political strategy, his seeming reluctance to work as a member of a team, and his tendency to be bitter and vituperative in debate. But McCombs' performance over the liquor issue in 1917 and 1918, his sharp tongue, and his relatively orthodox approach to monetary reform made him even less acceptable to Savage. McCombs became the caucus whip and Fraser the caucus secretary.

Although during the period 1920–22 Holland was not infrequently in a caucus minority of one or, with Savage and Bartram, three and recorded his dissent against a number of caucus decisions, he was reappointed leader in March 1921. Savage, however, who took over the chair for the election, continued to chair the caucus meetings throughout 1921, 1922 and 1923, even when Holland, the titular chairman, was present.

The Christchurch trio persistently contested Holland's leadership, but challenges from McCombs were defeated by 5–2 in September 1921 and by 6–3 in June 1922. The matter was settled finally following the 1922 election. After rejecting a motion from McCombs and Sullivan that no office in the PLP should be held by the same MP for more than one session of Parliament successively, a greatly enlarged Labour Caucus at its February 1923 meeting re-elected Holland by 14 votes to 3.

This was a much more decisive victory for Holland than that reported by such newspapers as *Truth*, which immediately after the 1922 general election had suggested that Labour should replace Holland with 'a comparatively sane man like Mick Savage', who was the 'only other possible candidate'.[4] *Truth* erroneously reported in subsequent editions that 'Savage (Mick). Wrongly-named; not a cannibal. Hobby: Prohibition (of profiteering)' had lost a leadership ballot to 'Holland (Harry). Labour's laborious Leader. . . . Hobbies: standing orders and class-consciousness', by 9 votes to 8.[5] In fact, at the leadership caucus Savage, who was nominated by the new MP for Auckland East, John A. Lee, had won

the deputy chairmanship by 11–6 from Sullivan, thus formalising his frequent chairmanship of caucus meetings.

Savage subsequently suggested that the position of chairman of the PLP be placed on a more satisfactory basis than annual election, and after a long debate caucus resolved by 10–5 that, thenceforth, following each general election, it would elect its officers for the life of each parliament.

For the following ten years Savage and Holland complemented and, in some ways, contradicted each other. Physically, both men were below medium height and, as they grew older, of stocky build. Temperamentally, both were, as Holland's biographer has described Holland, 'quite without duplicity or spite, transparently honest, fair, gentlemanly'.[6] Both, it might be added, could be uncompromising on matters of principle. But there the resemblances ended. Savage was a bachelor with no family commitments; Holland's wife had eight children, whom she raised often in the absence of her husband and with a grossly inadequate income.[7] Savage preferred to speak on domestic affairs; Holland was often preoccupied with foreign affairs and events in far-off places, especially the Soviet Union. Savage confined his reading to economics and his writing to speeches and pamphlets; Holland read much more widely and wrote poems and book reviews. Savage, who refused to be embittered by his experiences and who retained a keen if dry sense of humour, became increasingly the warm voice of persuasive, humanitarian reason; Holland, distanced from most of his colleagues by both the isolated geographic location of his electorate and his somewhat aloof personality, remained the harsh, aggrieved voice of protest with no really intimate friends in the caucus.[8] Savage spoke more and more about the need for reform and control of the monetary system; Holland remained a more conventional Marxist. Savage worked tirelessly for immediate political power; Holland dwelt on past and current injustices and ultimate socialist objectives. Savage remained a political optimist, impressing nearly all with whom he came in contact with his gentle, friendly, warm personality;[9] Holland, who was regarded, somewhat unjustly, as being cold and dogmatic, and who was certainly self-conscious and very sensitive to criticism, became, in his wife's words, 'crippled up, body and soul'.[10] Savage became increasingly conscious of and responsive to political reality; Holland drifted from it.

One reason for the differences between Labour's two parliamentary leaders was that Savage found it easier than Holland to accept the possibility of cautious economic and social change based on persuasion and consensus and achieved through parliamentary means. At caucus meetings Savage frequently took the initiative, moving motions and becoming a member of small sub-committees established to study policy or prepare legislation. For example, with McCombs, Savage drafted a proportional representation bill in 1921; he proposed the election of a leader for a three-year term; during the 1923 session he sat on caucus

committees studying the controversial land policy, the question of an agricultural bank, the export of dairy produce, and company taxation.

On many issues debated in caucus between 1920 and 1925 Savage supported or was supported by Fraser, Parry, Bartram and, after the 1922 election, by Lee and Alec Monteith, the one-term MP for Wellington West.

Savage continued during 1920 to be a popular speaker at Labour's indoor and outdoor meetings and often found himself defending the parliamentary method of seeking to achieve Labour's goals against those who favoured the exclusive use of direct industrial action. He issued an invitation to opponents of political action to attend a series of addresses he gave on the topic 'Is Parliament Worthwhile' and received a 'rousing' and 'lively' reception when he challenged his critics to debate the matter with him.[11] Savage persisted with this theme for the following eighteen months and, although he changed the title of the address to 'Is Parliament Played Out?', 'his quiet reasoning and sarcastic humour', according to the *Worker*, still 'delighted the audience'.[12]

But although he defended the parliamentary process, Savage did not go to the other extreme and abandon industrial organisation or his commitment to the creation of 'the One Big Union'. In April 1920, for example, 'Mick Savage dealt in very fine style with the practical side of O.B.U.' at a Sunday-night meeting in Auckland, arguing that craft unions were obsolete and that one large union organised on the basis of class and industry was the 'natural outcome of economic development'.[13]

In Parliament Savage pressed for an amendment to the Arbitration Act to provide for nationwide unions, and his continued support for direct action when required was indicated in October 1920 when the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants presented Savage with a pocketbook in recognition of the 'splendid help' he had given the union during the recent railway strike.[14]

Most New Zealand unions were unwilling, however, to support the call of two Australasian Labour conferences in 1921 and 1922 in favour of one big union based on the Australian and New Zealand Workers' Unions, preferring instead to affiliate to a less centralised Alliance of Labour, and thereafter Savage devoted his energies almost entirely to politics.[15]

The attitude of the anti-Labour press outside Auckland was at first rather hostile to the new member for Auckland West, the *Otago Witness* describing Savage as 'a gentleman with an American twang, chiefly affected, it would seem, and a fine contempt for any school of thought but his own'.[16] The *Dominion* was somewhat kinder, if also rather patronising, in suggesting that Savage 'was at one time accounted too extreme to be followed by ordinary unionists in the north, but he has probably tempered his own opinions in the light of more experience. . . . In his own subjects, and from his own viewpoint always, Mr Savage is a well-informed man with more than average ability'.[17]

From his maiden speech in Parliament in 1920, Savage continually emphasised that his aim was 'the uplifting of humanity', not the breaking-down of society. He argued that the task was to raise the living standards of the poor and to give security to all, not to drag everyone down to the lowest common denominator. Savage had no illusions about the so-called dignity of Labour in a capitalist country. He asked his fellow parliamentarians whether any of them 'would be content to go from the cradle to the grave as a wage-earner. . . . He had never met a man or a woman yet worthy of his or her salt who was willing to do so. The ideal of everyone was to get away from the ranks of the wage-earners'.[18] Savage unequivocally attacked the wage system, the high price of land associated with unearned capital gains, the public debt and the private banking system. The government should create 'a state bank, and use the public credit for the public good' as an alternative to borrowing overseas.[19]

Although Peter Fraser soon came to dominate Labour's education policy, Savage early in his parliamentary career made a number of suggestions in that field: better pre-service training for all teachers; higher salaries comparable to lawyers and doctors to bring teaching in line with other professions; women teachers to be paid equal salaries to men in the profession because they did equal work; free school books; the introduction of swimming into the school curriculum; and the total exclusion of religious education from state schools.

Savage showed little interest in foreign affairs. Unlike some of his colleagues he was not an uncritical admirer of the Russian Revolution, which he was prepared to put in commonsense perspective. He suggested to Parliament:

> There is no person outside a lunatic asylum who would apply Russian methods to New Zealand conditions or try to apply New Zealand methods to Russian conditions. The Soviet Government was born of a revolution, the result of a war. They met their opponents, who had rifles in their hands, and it was only reasonable to suppose that they were not going to meet them with statutes in their hands. . . . There are no angels in any country; there are only just men and women, who are trying to fight their way out of the political and economic wilderness as best they know how.[20]

Savage was suspicious of excessive centralisation of government. Universities and hospital boards needed to retain their autonomy, he believed, because,

> I want to warn the House against that tendency towards centralization. You want decentralization. You need to place the Government of the country as close to the firesides of the people as you can—to take it from within four walls out to the homes of the people and make them acquainted with their responsibility for their own affairs if you are going to get anywhere.[21]

Occasionally Savage showed his suspicion not only of those who wished

to centralise government but also of those who claimed to understand and represent the needs and aspirations of the working class without first-hand experience of it. Although he denied any personal malice towards 'intellectuals', he challenged them to try working in the mines and compared his own experience of life with their formal education in schools and universities.[22]

Savage was concerned that the Labour Party should not become too involved publicly in sectarian controversy. Although he was successful in moving that the Labour Caucus oppose in Parliament a bill to introduce religious instruction in state schools, he agreed that MPs should be free to vote as they wished on any move to submit the matter to a referendum.[23] On another occasion Savage used his casting vote as chairman to instruct Holland and all other members of the caucus not to engage in further public debate with Rev. Howard Elliott, leader of the Protestant Political Association, whom Holland had charged inside and outside Parliament with disloyalty to the British monarchy.[24] It is not clear whether Savage was motivated by fear of a renewal of the sectarian bitterness that had marred the 1919 and 1922 elections or a belief that Holland's pronouncements appeared to be a defence of the monarchy and a condemnation of those who criticised it.

Savage shared with all the other Labour MPs strong views on Asian immigration into New Zealand. In April 1920 Savage, Parry and Bartram, in response to approaches from the Auckland Returned Soldiers' Association and the Auckland Waterside Workers' Union, sent a telegram to Prime Minister Massey:

> In view of the alarming influx of Asiatics and other classes of cheap labour, involving as it must, the lowering of the living standards of our people, as well as the probable deterioration in the physical standard of all races mixing indiscriminately, we ask that steps be immediately taken to deal with this menace.[25]

In August Massey's government introduced into Parliament an Immigration Restriction Amendment Bill. Labour did not oppose the legislation and, indeed, Holland moved three amendments that would have made entry to New Zealand for Asian immigrants even more restrictive, and Sullivan and Parry spoke strongly in favour of maintaining New Zealand's racial purity.[26]

Savage took a position distinct from most other MPs, including his Labour colleagues. He disagreed with those who suggested that the intermingling of the races would lead inevitably to a hybrid, degenerate race, but he also questioned the more optimistic view that such an intermixture was highly desirable. The biological implications, he suggested, might one day perhaps be decided by scientists; that question was certainly not one within the competence of New Zealand politicians. Savage went on, however, to argue that all races and all nations were concerned legitimately about their own uniqueness and that a desire for racial purity

and ethnic identity was not confined to those of European descent alone. For example, just as New Zealanders did not, he believed, want a 'piebald New Zealand', so he was also sure that Indians did not want a 'piebald India'. Savage concluded that, on the pragmatic grounds of nationalism, cultural identity and economic competition, rather than on the more questionable biological grounds, he was justified in supporting restrictions on non-European immigration.

Most of Savage's speeches dealt with two other basic, interrelated themes: the ideal of a comprehensive social security system, which would cover 'every citizen against sickness and illness as well as against poverty in old age',[27] and the need to control and reform the country's financial system in order to provide the money both for economic development and social welfare. Social reform, Savage argued, was impossible, even in a country that had the physical and material ability to produce ample to meet everyone's needs, without the government concurrently increasing and redistributing the available purchasing power represented by currency and credit so that supply and demand could be brought together.

Until Walter Nash entered Parliament in 1929, Savage and McCombs shared the responsibility of leading Labour in the budget and other financial debates. Even after Nash became Labour's main finance spokesman, Savage continued frequently to discuss economics and particularly monetary reform inside and outside the House. Again and again Savage argued that if through higher wages and increased pensions people could buy more, then the existing surplus production of goods and services would be consumed and more demanded. Savage also argued that finance for the expansion of farming and industry should come not only from long-term development loans, which he believed had to be carefully restricted, especially from overseas sources, but from credit and additional currency created and lent at low rates of interest by a government-controlled banking system.[28] This would further increase production, employment opportunities and incomes, and provide the taxation to finance the ambitious system of pensions and free health services that Savage was proposing.

The guiding principles of the pension and social security scheme that Savage believed Labour should enact were enunciated precisely in his maiden speech:

> The pension system of today—whether for the man who fought, the widow, the old age pensioner, or any other person—is based on the poverty of the receiver. . . . The pension system that ought to be, and that will be, will be a pension system based on citizenship—based upon services rendered by the receiver.[29]

Savage was not interested in abstract theories but in practical measures to relieve suffering in all its forms and frequently drew on his experiences as a member of the Auckland Hospital and Charitable Aid Board to illustrate and reinforce his arguments and to attack the much more

conservative attitudes and policies of the Health Department and the British Medical Association.

Savage regarded the old-age pension of 15*s*. a week in 1920 as totally inadequate. He consistently claimed that the aged were entitled, as of right, to a reasonable standard of living and that they should not have to eke out a miserable existence on begrudged and demeaning charity. He pushed in his first session in Parliament for an immediate increase of fifty per cent in pensions, arguing that 'when men and women who have given of their best arrive at old age . . . they must be allowed to live decently'.[30] The increased pension could, he suggested, be funded by a new tax on the increase in unimproved land values. Not only the aged but the sick, the very young, the blind, women and girls in distress, and the unemployed received Savage's attention.

In 1920 Savage advocated in Parliament the establishment of a completely free health service financed by a special tax and administered by local hospital boards. Savage stated that, 'the health of the people is the community's greatest asset' and that the presentation of bills to patients was 'vicious'.[31] Throughout his speeches ran the assumption that social security would not only free people from physical deprivation, suffering and mental anxiety, but that it would enable them to retain their dignity and self-respect. Having to appeal for charitable aid when one was sick was humiliating. All people were entitled as of right to 'a reasonable standard of living in the days when they are unable to look after themselves, whether it be because of old age or physical infirmity'.[32] Savage declared that a person, particularly with family responsibilties, should receive no less than the weekly wage being received prior to an accident or sickness, because

> it was when men and women were ill that they needed their full wages, and not 50 per cent or 60 per cent or any other smaller amount. It stood to reason that when a wage-earner was laid up his responsibilities were certainly no less, and in the great majority of cases were considerably more.[33]

In three successive years, from 1922, Savage introduced into Parliament a Motherhood Endowment Bill.[34] The measure proposed that every worker, whether married or not, should be paid a basic wage, adequate to keep a married couple with two children at a decent standard of living. Savage recognised that such a basic wage meant that many single wage-earners would benefit from having three 'phantom' dependants and that families with more than two children would be disadvantaged. Larger families, therefore, were to be helped by the payment to the mother of 10*s*. per week for every child under the age of fifteen after the first two. Savage stressed the importance of an adequate upbringing to both the child and society. Although the scheme would be funded by a special income tax, bachelors and single women without children would not be unfairly treated or taxed because they would be paid the basic wage even

though it was established for a family of four. Because only bills moved by the government were allowed to pass a second reading if an appropriation of money was required, Savage's proposal lapsed each year.

In 1926, however, the Reform Government led by Gordon Coates passed a Family Allowances Act modelled on Savage's earlier bills. Both Reform and Labour MPs congratulated Savage on his earlier initiative and perseverance, the Attorney General observing that 'I am sure that no one would deny him any credit . . . for his advocacy of the principle which by this Bill is about to become an established fact', a compliment endorsed by Parry.[35] Even though a Royal Commission of Inquiry into Social Security in New Zealand concluded almost half a century later that the 1926 act 'was probably the most noteworthy development in social welfare in the first 30 years of this century', Savage expressed his regret that the amount to be paid was only a fifth of what he had suggested.[36] He subsequently told the Labour Party's conference that a more adequate family allowance was essential under socialism because 'a wage fixed on average families meant hardships where there were extra children. The time would come when the mothers of the nation would be properly acknowledged'.[37]

The treatment of the mentally ill was another matter that Savage persistently raised. Savage told Parliament, 'Where we have a couple of medical men trying to attend to a thousand or more patients it is clearly a matter of utter impossibility for them to make themselves acquainted with individual cases; it becomes a matter of superficial attention'.[38] He advocated the provision of more adequate facilities, more generous medical staffing allowances in mental hospitals, better pay and conditions for psychiatric nurses, and 'half-way' hospitals for the treatment of patients with less serious mental disorders. Savage also requested a Royal Commission to reassess completely New Zealand's approach to the mentally ill, stating, 'I refuse to believe that all mental patients are exactly the same, and that all we have to do is to keep them away from the rest of society. . . . I do not think any one has a better claim on the humanitarianism of society than the individual who is mentally afflicted'.[39]

Savage adopted a similar attitude to prison reform. The prevention of crime and the rehabilitation of criminals were, in his view, more important than punishment, which 'has often the effect of making the individual a bigger criminal than he was before he received it'. Relating crime to the criminal's economic and social environment, Savage noted that 'Some of the world's greatest criminologists declare that society has just the percentage of criminals that it deserves, and I am one who is in agreement with that view'.[40]

Through the early 1920s Savage was busy not only in Parliament but as a very active member of both the Auckland City Council and the Auckland Hospital and Charitable Aid Board. At his second council meeting Savage had questioned the right of the city treasurer to hire and

Labour Party Caucus 1911–22. Seated from left to right: McCombs, Holland, Fraser, Bartram. Standing from left to right: Howard, Parry, Munro, Sullivan, and Savage, who had recently shaved off his moustache. *Alexander Turnbull Library*

Auckland Hospital, 1921. *Auckland Institute and Museum*

New Zealand Labour Party

WE, the undersigned, hereby nominate

M. M. J. Savage

as a fit and proper person to contest a Parliamentary Election on behalf of the New Zealand Labour Party.*

	Name and Address.	Union.
1.	G.Y. Jones 29 Emmett St Ponsonby	Alk. West Br.
2.	W. Johnson 37A St Marys Rd.	" " "
3.	A Keen 65 Ponsonby Rd	" " "
4.	P. Kendall 65 Ponsonby Rd	" " "
5.	T. Inglis 9 Ardmore Rd	" " "
6.	R. Winiped Moore. West End Rd	" " "

Every nomination paper must be signed by six (6) members of any affiliated organisation, and returned to Moses Ayrton, Trades Hall, 126 Vivian Street, Wellington, not later than Wednesday, 30th November, 1921.

New Zealand Labour Party

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION PLEDGE

I, Micheal Joseph Savage being a candidate for selection in the Auckland West Electorate selection ballot, hereby pledge myself in the event of my non-selection, not to oppose the selected candidate, but will do all in my power to secure the successful candidate's return. In the event of my election, I pledge myself to do my utmost to carry out the principles embodied in the New Zealand Labour Party's Objective and Platform, and on all questions affecting the platform, to vote as a majority of the Parliamentary Party may decide at a duly constituted caucus meeting.

I further pledge myself not to retire from the contest without the consent of the organisations controlling the election.

Signed M. J. Savage Witnessed by Ezekiel Jarks

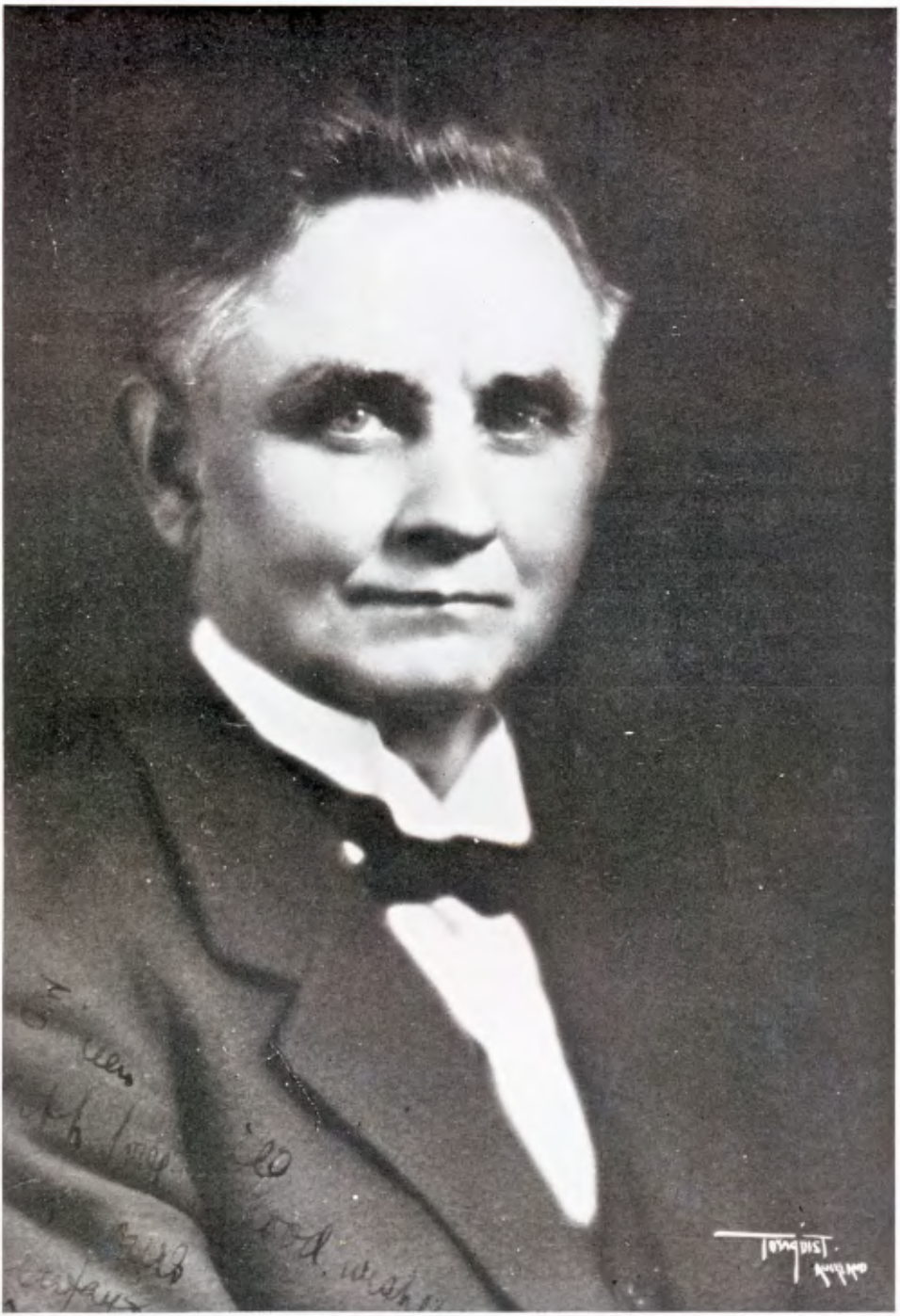
Member of Central Branch. Witnessed by D Wilson

Secretary L. R. C. Auckland.

Savage's nomination form for Auckland West, 1921

Savage and his nieces, Rowland Savage's daughters Eileen (above), May (right) and Doris (below). *Mrs E.M. Brown, Mrs Doris Cofield and Mrs May O'Donoghue*

John A. Lee. *Alexander Turnbull Library*



Savage in the late 1920s. *Mrs E.M. Brown*

fire staff without the approval of the council and had demanded an inquiry into the dismissal of a Rev. G. W. Smailes from the council's employ.[41] That issue was to bedevil the council for some months and, when the Finance and Legal Committee of which Savage was a member finally endorsed the treasurer's actions, Savage appealed to the full council, which overturned the committee's decision and by a vote of 11–7 reinstated Smailes.[42]

At council meetings Savage asked questions and commented on a wide range of topics. He proposed a donation to help in the formation of the Waterside Worker's Union band; he pressed for better lighting in various Auckland streets; he queried the activities of the bailiff; he wanted higher wages paid to various council employees such as the caretaker of Myers Park and the traffic inspectors; and he suggested that all items of ordinary business to be discussed at council meetings should be submitted in writing and copies placed on the councillors' desks before the meetings.

As a member of the Leys Institute Committee, Savage was responsible for the oversight of a library containing about 24 000 books, a gymnasium, and community meeting rooms. These rooms were used by scouts, cubs, football and swiming clubs, the WEA, the Ponsonby creche, and for concerts, debating and lectures not of a religious nature, which were specifically prohibited in the will of William Leys, whose estate had funded the institute primarily to keep young people off the streets and engaged in healthy physical and mental recreation.

Shortly before Savage joined the council there had been, in early 1919, a serious dispute between the tramway employees' union and the Auckland Electric Tram Company, a very inefficient, privately owned and operated company. Three months after Savage was elected, the council purchased the tramways and set out to improve and greatly extend the service. Savage, who never owned a car or learnt to drive one and who always travelled on public transport, took a keen interest in the tramways system. He frequently criticised the service, commenting that 'it was quicker to walk than to catch a tram from Ponsonby to the City during peak hours'.[43] He questioned why the tramways workshops asked prospective employees for their place of birth and age, and requested that preference be given to returned soldiers who had previously worked on the trams. He supported an increase in fares to make the system sounder financially but wanted free transport for disabled ex-servicemen, workers' concession cards to be usable at weekends, and the age for children's fares to be raised from fourteen to fifteen.[44]

Although the achievement of the council as a whole rather than any single member, the four years Savage spent on the council from 1919 to 1923 saw a major expansion in the provision or improvement of civic amenities in addition to the tramways. A comprehensive scheme of electric power production and reticulation was undertaken, and in 1922 an Auckland Electric Power Board was set up to cover Auckland city and

twelve adjoining local body areas. Just before Savage left the council, the Nihotupu Dam was completed, helping relieve the perennial summer nightmare of serious water shortages and contaminated supplies. During that period the council also decided to establish a zoo at Western Springs.

Before the 1921 local body elections, Savage, after requesting reports from council officers on the state of the local body electoral roll, persuaded the council to prepare and sell to the public lists of voters removed from the roll for not voting at the previous election. This was a great help to Labour canvassers. He also requisitioned a special meeting of the council to consider adopting proportional representation for the election, but only Bloodworth and one non-Labour councillor supported him.

The anti-Labour councillors called themselves the 'Progressive Citizens' ticket and most were also endorsed by the Protestant Political Association. Although Savage increased his own vote by fifty per cent in 1919, he slipped from thirteenth to twentieth place on the list of twenty-one successful candidates. Bloodworth was also re-elected, but Labour's third councillor, George Davis, was defeated.

Despite Labour's dismal showing, Savage was again appointed to the key Finance and Legal Committee. He also remained on the Leys Institute Committee and became a member of the Markets Committee, which oversaw not only the fruit and vegetable markets but also the council abattoirs and the municipal fish business. Since 1914 the council had engaged in the catching, processing and marketing of fish in an attempt to reduce its retail price. Although the enterprise was profitable at first, by 1921 the council's two trawlers, fish market, and retail shop in Queen Street were showing a loss, although the shop was serving about 5000 customers each week. Savage fought strongly but unsuccessfully against those on the council who wished to sell the business to a private company, arguing that the result would be a supply monopoly and an inevitable increase in the price to the consumer.

There were also persistent labour problems at the Westfield abattoir, particularly over modernisation and whether workers should be paid by contract or day labour. The dispute culminated in mid-1921 in a strike. Savage tried to have the dispute referred to conciliation but was ruled out of order at a council meeting.

For a time Savage was also in a minority over a dispute between the council and Dr J. M. Liston, Roman Catholic Coadjutor Bishop of Auckland and one of Savage's constituents in Auckland West. Liston, who developed a friendly relationship with Savage, sometimes taking him out for Sunday afternoon drives, had angered many Aucklanders with his 1922 St Patrick's Day address in the Auckland Town Hall. The council, with Bloodworth dissenting and Savage absent, affirmed its loyalty to King George V and the British Empire, deplored Liston's 'disloyal and seditious speech', resolved in future to deny him and his supporters the use of the Town Hall or the Domain, and asked the government to take action

against the bishop. The controversy raged throughout the year until the council and Liston, whom Savage described in private correspondence as 'one of the finest characters in Christendom', were brought together through 'a mutual friend'.[45]

Savage did not seek re-election to the council when his second term expired at the end of 1923. His parliamentary duties, especially following his selection as deputy leader, had been taking more and more of his time and Savage was attending only about half the council meetings.

Savage also retired as the only Labour member of the Auckland Hospital and Charitable Aid Board, which noted in its minutes that 'eulogistic references' were made about him and that 'it was agreed to place on record the appreciation of the services rendered by Mr Savage, whilst a member of the Board'.[46] The appreciation, expressed much more warmly than was usual in the case of retiring members, especially after only four years' service, was obviously deserved; Savage had immersed himself in the board's activities during that period.

One of Savage's first actions after being elected to the board in 1919 had been to second the motion that the board purchase 123 acres of the Puriri Park Estate at Manurewa for an auxiliary hospital site in South Auckland.[47]

His main interest, however, was in people, not buildings. He persuaded the board to seek changes to the Pensions Act so that widows could be paid pensions irrespective of their length of residence in New Zealand.[48] He successfully moved the establishment of a special committee, including himself, to meet twenty-two nurses who had submitted a long list of complaints, especially about the long and irregular hours they had to work. Largely as a result of Savage's advocacy, a contribution recognised publicly by other board members, the committee recommended a number of improvements, including the reduction of nurses' hours of work to eight per day.[49] He fought unsuccessfully against a proposal to increase hospital fees for patients.[50] And he commenced an annual custom of visiting the children's wards at the hospital, and also various orphanages and children's homes, on Christmas Day.

Savage's major contributions came through the various board committees on which he served. In addition to the Hospital Inspection Committee, he was on the Costley Home Committee and the Relief Committee. The Costley Home was a geriatric institution that was later to become Green Lane Hospital. It housed 280–300 elderly, infirm patients and during Savage's membership of the committee a considerable attempt was made to upgrade the home, which had inadequate bathroom, lavatory and dining-room facilities, was short of trained staff, and in which the patients were confined to bed from 4 p.m. until breakfast the following morning.[51]

The Relief Committee, at its fortnightly meetings, considered applications for help from people in distress: the unemployed, sick, aged,

widows, orphans, those recently released from prison, deserted wives, indeed any who were destitute and in need. The committee had certain funds that it could allocate. In July 1921, for example, the average number of people receiving sustenance rations from the committee was 699, the number receiving assistance with rent, 312, and the number of children being boarded, 89.[52]

Although busy with parliamentary and local body activities, Savage continued to be the dominant figure in the party organisation in Auckland, being officially appointed organiser for all the by-elections that took place in the region during the 1920s. In October 1921 he returned to Auckland from Parliament to organise Labour's by-election campaign for the Auckland East seat. The obvious Labour candidate was a recent recruit to the party, John Alexander (Jack) Lee. A natural and pugnacious orator, the thirty-year-old Lee, after a youth of petty crime, had become a war hero, winning the DCM for 'fearless gallantry' at Messines in 1917 and losing his left arm at Mailly Maillet in 1918. Lee, whom *Truth* described in the early 1920s as a man who 'just fell on the Labour side of the Liberal fence' and whose hobbies were 'fighting physically and verbally',[53] was an executive member of the Auckland Returned Soldiers' Association and, within a year of his joining the party in 1919, president of the Auckland LRC. Although Lee was reluctant to stand, Savage persuaded him to become the candidate, partly by assuring Lee that his youthful delinquency was irrelevant and partly by telling Lee, 'I'll back you out of my own pocket', which he did.[54]

Lee came second in a four-way contest, polling 2221 votes to the 2613 cast for the successful Reform candidate, another well-known returned soldier, the blind Clutha Mackenzie. David Wilson, the LRC secretary, reporting on the campaign, observed that Savage's work for Lee as his campaign organiser 'cannot be overestimated'.[55]

Lee was to win the seat for Labour a year later at the 1922 general elections, which saw Labour's strength in Parliament doubled to seventeen seats and appeared to give it the balance of power between Reform and the Liberals, although time and again enough Liberals abstained or voted with the Reform Government to prevent its defeat. At that election, Savage polled the highest vote received by a Labour candidate anywhere in New Zealand.

Labour's relative success at the 1922 elections and Savage's election as deputy leader spurred him on to greater effort. His retirement from the city council and the hospital board gave him more time to devote to national politics. Savage realised that to win elections Labour needed to expand and attract support from others than trade unionists. He declared that Labour must 'have sufficient intelligence to recognise that no party can hope to govern this or any any other country without taking into consideration every section of those who render useful service to society'.[56] Farmers, burdened with mortgages and desperate for credit to

develop their properties, appeared a likely source of converts to the Labour cause, though Holland, Fraser, Semple and many other Labour leaders showed little interest in farming or land questions beyond a simple and vague commitment to some form of land nationalisation, and memories of the 1913 strike still continued to drive an emotional wedge between many farmers and trade unionists.

Savage, however, in May 1923, set out on an extended organising and speaking tour of the North Island. At meeting after meeting throughout the Waikato, Rotorua, King Country and Waimarino districts he spoke to rural workers, such as railwaymen, timber workers and struggling small farmers, forming new branches and extending the membership of others at Raetihi, Taumarunui, Ohakune, Rangataua, Manunui, Ongarue, Hinuera, Matamata and Putaruru. At Putaruru he attacked the 'money lords' and 'credit dealers' who used their 'money monopoly' simply for private profit,[57] and at Matamata he told his audience that 'his party knew they could not govern this country until they converted the people on the land'.[58]

Later in the year, at the end of the parliamentary session, Savage was on the road again, this time in the Manawatu, speaking at Aokautere, Longburn, Kairanga, Ravenswood and Palmerston North, from where the local branch secretary of the party reported that Savage's 'quiet and inoffensive manner with just that sting to interest when talking, ranks him among the few politicians that one wants to hear again'.[59]

In February 1924 Savage became the first Labour MP to visit Northland, speaking to farmers and kauri gumdiggers at Kauri Flat, Waikarara, Waihopo, Awanui, Victoria Valley, Kaitaia and Hikurangi.[60] He then returned to meetings in Auckland city, Birkdale, Papakura and Ngaruawahia during March before spending early April in the Bay of Plenty concentrating on the Whakatane and Napier districts. In late April Savage took the opportunity of visiting Invercargill and Southland while in Dunedin for the NZLP's conference, a conference that nearly started in tragedy when the car carrying Holland and Fraser crashed and overturned, but without serious injury to the occupants.

By 1924 the Auckland LRC was the strongest in the country, with a third of the party's total membership. Savage and Lee represented it at the 1924 conference, where Savage presented the report of the party's finance committee. He proposed that conference approve a budget of £2,000 for the daily expenses of the National Office and Information Bureau under Walter Nash, who had become national secretary in 1922, and a further £25,000 for a fighting fund for the 1925 election. Savage promised to be personally responsible for £1,000, most of which he would collect in his own electorate of Auckland West. The scheme was adopted, despite reservations expressed by Lee.

At the end of 1924 Savage informed the national executive that he was prepared to place his services at their disposal for organising and

speaking outside Auckland for eleven days every month, beginning January 1925, and was also prepared to address meetings of trade unions in Auckland at any time. This was much more than any other MP was prepared to offer, Lee, for example, pledging one month of his time during 1925.[61] Before long Savage was again in Northland, at Ruatangata, Kaikohe, Moerewa, Russell, Maungatapere and Whangarei, attacking 'land speculation and financial speculation' and advocating government control of the money supply.

He returned to Auckland to rally Labour supporters for the election, stressing the need for finance, capable candidates, canvassers, and a determination to win. 'What was wanted was action, not talk', he stated firmly, because 'The Labour Party was not playing with politics, and intended to govern New Zealand. . . . in the interests of the exploited'.[62]

In May 1925, after dominating New Zealand politics for thirteen years, Prime Minister Massey died. Savage initially recommended caution in contesting the by-election in the rural seat of Franklin if it became a two-way contest between Reform and Labour, but was convinced that if a Liberal candidate was also nominated, 'then Labour should certainly fight the by-election'.[63] After visiting the seat, Savage sent a telegram urging that Labour fight the by-election. Fraser replied that the executive was dubious and 'but for your recommendation were inclined to disapprove'.[64]

Savage, who was appointed organiser for the by-election, had as Labour's candidate the chairman of the Auckland Milk Company, J. S. Montgomerie, 'a grizzled honest cocky' with 'a tremendous personal following'.[65] Savage spent the entire campaign in the electorate and drew an audience of 200 to his meeting in Pukekohe. Lee, although he initially opposed the decision to contest the seat, assisted in the campaign. Both were publicly optimistic about Labour's chances of winning the seat.[66] But privately they were increasingly worried by the adverse reaction to Labour's land policy, Lee admitting, 'My god that land programme is a hell of a grill to toast a candidate on when the audience is hostile'.[67]

The Reform Government held the seat easily, the successful Reformer polling almost three times as many votes as Montgomerie. Savage, who commented in regard to Labour's land policy, 'we are candidates for the treasury benches and not for Avondale [Auckland's asylum for the mentally insane]', and Lee recommended that Labour's land policy be abandoned. They were unable, in the months leading up to the general election, to convince Holland and others, who continued to condemn private ownership of farmland. Although Savage was also forced to go on defending the policy in public, behind the scenes he worked to change it, particularly in the areas of permanent tenure, inheritance and valuation, seeking to have the usehold tenure concept replaced by an emphasis on guaranteed prices for primary products and cheap credit from a state bank.

The Reform Government built its 1925 election campaign around the

personality of its new leader, Gordon Coates. Labour responded by trying to convince a sceptical electorate that Holland was preferable. The election result was a great disappointment for Labour. Reform went into the election with thirty-nine seats and emerged with fifty-five. The representation of the Liberal Party, temporarily renamed the National Party, was halved from twenty-one to ten. Labour at first appeared to have lost six of its seventeen seats, although one of the losses, McCombs' seat of Lyttelton, was subsequently reversed by an electoral petition.[68]

In March and April 1926, while Holland was on an extended trip to Australia, a by-election was held in the Auckland seat of Eden, as a result of the appointment of Sir James Parr as New Zealand's High Commissioner in London. Savage again took over as campaign organiser and the lawyer Rex Mason, who had contested the seat in 1922 and 1925 for Labour, was chosen once more by a large majority on the first count from Bloodworth, Langstone and Purtell. Lee, who believed that Mason, 'though lacking in pugnacity' and 'unable to deal with the realities of politics' was 'loyal, sincere . . . the best, indeed the only candidate', had 'quite a violent squabble with one or two others who butted in'.[69] But the Reform Party, which had held the seat with large majorities since the party had been created, was even more divided. The official Reform candidate was James Gunson, mayor of Auckland, but by selecting him Reform had rejected Ellen Melville, who claimed sexual discrimination and stood as an independent Reformer, splitting the government's vote and allowing Mason to win narrowly. Nash recorded that, allowing for the divided Reform vote, the result 'was largely due to the organising efforts of Mr M. J. Savage, MP, assisted by a splendid women's committee',[70] and the *Worker*, reflecting on the result, noted that

> The organising on the Labour side was in the very capable hands of Mr M. J. Savage, and his almost meticulous exactitude and attention to detail was felt at every stage of the fight. . . . House-to-house canvassing was carried to a fine art under the guidance of the Labour organiser. So many old ladies of both sexes had to be told that if the Labour candidate was elected he would not confiscate their property; also that he stood four-square against the doctrine of free love.[71]

The election of Mason made little difference to the situation in Parliament or little impact on the government's massive majority. Savage wrote to his niece, Eileen, that 'in the present N.Z. parliament. . . . our task is a hopeless one owing to the huge Gov[ernment] majority, but we give them a run for their money occasionally'.[72]

Unless a meeting kept him in Wellington, Savage, who disliked being away from home, always made the train trip back to Auckland at weekends during the parliamentary session, the family's little fox-terrier, Bonzo, going wild upon Savage's return. In 1923 Savage and the French family moved to 9 Wanganui Avenue in Ponsonby, and in 1927 they shifted again to a roomy house with a large garden and pleasant outlook over trees to the

Waitemata Harbour. That house at 9 Salisbury Street in Herne Bay was the only property Savage ever owned. Friends, acquaintances, constituents and colleagues, especially Parry and Lee, frequently called in, although little formal entertaining was done. Elizabeth French became particularly friendly with Jack Lee's wife, Mollie, and the two women lunched together every week.

In 1924 Bob French, who had left home in 1918 to become a country schoolteacher, married. Despite the disparity in their ages and the fact that Bob had not lived at home for almost seven years, Savage was best man at the wedding.

Aruba French, by then a young woman of eighteen, sometimes talked to Savage about politics, his advice to her being 'don't take up politics because you have to have your boxing gloves on' all the time.[73] Savage was very much aware of how easy it was to hurt and to be hurt in politics but he appeared rarely to worry if someone criticised him personally, merely smiling and saying, 'He's entitled to his opinion'. His mild manner was not achieved without considerable self-control in the face of provocation. On one occasion Aruba became furious when she was told, just before Savage was to address a meeting in the Franklin Road Church Hall, that Savage had deserted a wife and seven children in Australia. When she indignantly recounted the allegation to Savage, he merely burst out laughing and replied, 'I hope she turns up with all the kids—I'd love them all'. Certainly the rumour that Savage had deserted a wife along with a brood of starving infants who varied in number was very persistent, as was another that claimed that he was not an Australian of Irish descent but an East European gypsy.[74] Savage restrained himself not only from becoming agitated about such slanders but also refrained from making personal attacks on his political opponents. He was later to observe that 'Each one of us who has taken up cudgels on behalf of working people has often felt the urge to hit hard the opponents of social justice, but, after all, one has to realise that it is impossible to get reason out of an adversary who has been rendered unconscious'.[75]

Savage enjoyed constituency work and meeting people. There was a constant stream of visitors to his home and constituency office; he regularly canvassed door to door in his electorate; he felt it a duty to attend if possible the funerals of constituents and checked the obituary column in the *Herald* each day; he engaged freely in conversation with fellow passengers at tram stops and on the daily rides to and from his home and the city; he visited regularly the various schools in his electorate and he never missed the Sacred Heart College annual sports meeting.

Developments in the Labour Party organisation generally satisfied Savage far less. At the 1925 annual conference his Auckland West branch, which the previous year had tried unsuccessfully to restrict party membership to trade unions and branches, moved 'that a member of any political organisation other than the Labour Party shall not be eligible

to act as Branch Officer, LRC Delegate or National Executive Member'.[76] The remit was carried by 103 votes to 9 and effectively excluded from the Labour Party members of the Communist Party which in 1924 had requested affiliation to the NZLP.

Savage was also somewhat depressed by the quality and effectiveness of the *Worker*, which, he told Nash, 'has progressesd backwards; its circulation never was lower, it is not backed by the trade union movement as it ought to be. If there was less howling for support and more doing something useful to command it, there would be a different story to tell. If there was less heresy hunting and more ginger put into things that count, the movement would have a press in keeping with its growth'.[77]

In an effort to provide 'more ginger' and to bring some unity into an increasingly faction-ridden Auckland LRC, Savage in 1926 stood for election as Auckland's area representative on the NZLP National Executive. In a seven-candidate contest he defeated the incumbent, Jim Purtell, on the sixth ballot, becoming and for some years remaining the only MP apart from the two caucus representatives on the national executive. Although he suggested at the 1928 conference that the position of area representative should be abolished,[78] he continued to stand for and be elected to the position until he became the party's leader in 1933. He also in early 1927 filled a vacancy on the LRC executive, becoming its assistant secretary responsible for organising Labour's municipal election campaign and for liquidating the LRC's financial debts.[79]

Savage, during the latter half of the twenties, was appalled by the vicious factional disputes within the Auckland LRC, where various groups and individuals, many of them tough, opinionated union officials, competed for personal power and to provide the goals, policies and strategy that they thought the party should be, but wasn't, pursuing as the economic situation deteriorated and social distress increased. At one stage Savage confided to Nash,

> I wish I could bury it. . . . There is a combining of communists and generally disgruntled elements which is tending to make the thing into a very substantial liability.
>
> There are a lot of good fellows and a whole lot of lunatics all mixed up and to follow the mixture into all its eccentricities would break the heart of a Napoleon. The result is that the good fellows get sick of the whole business. . . .
>
> About Auckland. Things have never been worse during my 22 years of residence. . . . what the end of it all is to be, Heaven only knows.[80]

Savage had not only been elected to the national executive in 1926. In July of the same year a caucus meeting had chosen him in a ballot with Armstrong to be the NZLP representative at an Empire Parliamentary Conference in Australia. Savage sailed for his homeland on 14 September and for the following three months travelled throughout the country he had left nineteen years before. Although he lamented that he was 'flying

all the time' and had 'little time for writing', Savage managed to send a number of lengthy letters back to Nash, chronicling his journey and recording his impressions.[81]

From Sydney he first went north throughout Queensland, looking at farming, industry, and irrigation schemes. He visited Brisbane, Toowoomba, Gympii, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns, Bundaberg and the Atherton Tableland before returning to Sydney via the northern coast of New South Wales and going to Newcastle and the Broken Hill Company's steel works. He visited the site of Australia's new capital, then under construction, at Canberra and was not impressed, although conceded that it might be all right in the future. He then wandered through the rural areas of southern New South Wales and Victoria, visiting sheep stations and wheat farms and the towns of Albury, Shepparton, Bendigo, Horsham and Ballarat. Of his visit to the Eureka Stockade, arguably the birthplace of Australian nationalism and democracy, Savage, who by then was 'fed up of trains, cars etc.', wrote to his niece Eileen that, 'to some of us this was the most sacred of all sights during the trip'.[82] From Melbourne he visited Tasmania, enduring a wild night crossing to the island state and an equally rough trip back across the Bass Strait.

On his return to Melbourne, Savage left the parliamentary delegation and journeyed north for a personal visit to his family and friends. He spent some time with William and his family on their farm at Griffith before moving on to Wahgunyah and staying with Rowland and his family at the Savage's Empire Hotel, from whose balcony years before he had given one of his earliest political addresses. Savage revelled in the family reunion at Wahgunyah and with his three surviving brothers, Richard, William and Rowland, talked and danced late into the night while Rowland's daughters played the piano and violin. He also travelled down to Benalla, visiting relatives and friends including his old schoolteacher. Savage recorded:

> Of course twenty years absence from my kith and kin helped to make the family gathering the most interesting part of all. The trip through the vineyards brought back memories of bygone days. The feeling cannot be explained, and certainly cannot be experienced many times during the life of the average mortal. I was delighted with every second of the time spent at Wahgunyah and felt very downhearted when saying good-bye. That is the only uncongenial part of such a visit. After all there is no real substitute for that kinship which seems to be the natural result of the family, and all other glittering things only tend to deceive as does the mirage the thirsty traveller.[83]

Savage was never to see his family again, except for Eileen's younger sisters May and Doris, who spent short holidays with their uncle in New Zealand. Richard and William both were to die in 1934, a year before their brother became New Zealand's Prime Minister. An indication that Savage, now

fifty-five years old, accepted the permanence of his separation from his family and his native land was the way he ended his letters to Eileen, 'Yours till the Bugle calls, Mick'.

On his visit to Griffith, built on the site of North Yanco, Savage 'found a complete transformation from what I knew the district to have been some 25 years ago. At that time it was suffering from a prolonged drought, with misery on every side'.[84] He applauded the 'revolution brought about by the conservation and reticulation of the waters of the Murrumbidgee River' so that 'the comparatively arid waste that I knew prior to and during 1900 is today producing tons of Australia's finest fruits'. Savage was equally impressed with the fact that 'the settlers seem content to invest their small savings in planting their 99 years' lease holding with vines and fruit trees, and to live by the results of their labours'.[85]

Savage was far less impressed with the Empire Parliamentary Conference itself and particularly with the British representatives, including those from the British Labour Party. He told the NZLP National Executive that, although there had not been time to discuss anything very fully, he had strongly opposed the attitude of the British that 'our mission is to fill up the empty spaces in the Dominions' without first establishing decent working conditions and living standards in New Zealand, Australia and elsewhere. He advocated a representative conference of Labour parties from throughout the Empire to discuss such matters.[86]

After rejoining the delegation, Savage next visited the 'beautiful city' of Adelaide and greatly admired a state housing scheme instituted in 1924 by that state's Labour Government. One thousand houses, constructed of brick, with five or six rooms, and erected close to the city in a 'good locality', were let at a very reasonable rent, which covered the interest and principal repayments. Savage collected as much information as he could on the scheme, which he thought could well be duplicated in New Zealand when Labour became the government there.

From Adelaide he set off in sweltering heat on the 2700-kilometre rail trek west to Perth. Western Australia had an interesting land settlement scheme funded by an agricultural bank, which attracted Savage's attention, and although he found Kalgoorlie, 'formerly the City of Gold . . . now showing signs of decay', Savage predicted that Western Australia would have a great future in both agriculture and mining.

Savage left Perth on 8 November, journeying 4400 kilometres by train to Sydney, where he embarked on the *Ulimaroa* for Auckland. He concluded, 'Australia is a country of vast possibilities, but I am returning to New Zealand still unconvinced that there is a better place on earth'.

Within weeks of his return, Savage was controlling Labour's municipal election campaign in Auckland. He organised a team of workers to mark and check the electoral roll and thoroughly canvass the whole of the city.[87] He prepared and published a weekly election newspaper, *The Citizen*. He personally wrote the party's platform for the hospital board,

to which he sought re-election, and persuaded the national executive to endorse that particular policy.[88] Regarding his decision to try to return to the hospital board, Savage told Eileen,

> In addition to other worries I'm a candidate for the Auckland Hospital Board, the election for which takes place on the last Wed[nesday] in April this year. I spent four years on that body once before, retiring in 1922. I have regretted my retirement ever since. Of course it is a tie, but one can render real service on such a controlling body.[89]

Savage polled the second highest vote behind the board's chairman, William Wallace, displaced a sitting member, and again became Labour's sole representative on the board.[90] He was to be re-elected in 1929, 1931 and 1933.

Savage and his allies within the party were also successful in 1927 in finally changing Labour's controversial land and agriculture policy, which he and others had decided was an economic and political impossibility and liability. A ten-man committee, which had over a period of time considered submissions on the existing usehold policy and possible changes to it, unanimously requested Savage to present its report to conference.[91] Savage introduced each part of the report clause by clause and spoke twenty-six times on this matter. Although the proposed new policy started by advocating the conservation of all state and publicly owned lands, it went on to guarantee the 'full recognition of owners' interests in all land, including tenure, the right of sale, transfer, and bequests'. Those who leased land were to be fully compensated for all improvements, and a policy of closer land settlement was to be a priority. The finance and credit sections of the policy, notably a state bank and easier availability of cheap loans, were to be emphasised. Although Savage argued that the Labour Party should be explicit when referring to public ownership of land by drawing a clear distinction between privately owned and state lands, he cautioned against being too specific. At the 1925 election Labour's candidates 'were asked to show where we drive every nail and were silly enough to try and do it, and our opponents hung their hats on them', a comment that led Semple to interject, 'Our scalps also'. The conference supported the revised and much more moderate land policy, though Savage continued to press for an even more moderate and attractive land settlement platform at subsequent conferences.[92]

A partial test of Labour's new farming policy came in September 1927, when Savage toured the apparently safe Reform Party electorate of Raglan in support of Labour's by-election candidate, W. Lee Martin, the fifty-seven-year-old president of the Waikato branch of the Farmers' Union. Savage spoke not only at the coal mines around Huntly but also at farming areas such as Waiuku, where the Labour vote rose from 31 in 1925 to 80 in 1927, and at Te Uku, where it went from 2 to 38. Lee Martin, in a five-way contest, became, with a margin of 182 votes, the first farmer elected to Parliament as a Labour candidate.

Savage told Eileen that he and his Labour colleagues were 'living in hope of considerably strengthening our position if not defeating the tories for the treasury benches' at the 1928 election.[93] He admitted that 'Politics are very uncertain. The heroes of today may be the footballs of tomorrow. . . . The success of labour will be due—when it does come—to the muddling of their opponents. The state of the world to-day would crucify labour in five minutes if responsibility for present conditions could be traced to them. Such is not possible. The guilt is easily traceable to their opponents'. Irrespective of the outcome, he intended doing everything he could because,

> The success of Labour is worth living for and men have died for less—died in millions. A personal victory or defeat is a trifling incident. A victory for a movement that stands for a better deal for the 'Bottom Dog' is a victory for principles for [which] hundreds of millions pray. So far as can be seen at present we are not likely to have this life over again so we might just as well try to leave a mark where ever we tread. If by our action we can leave this world a little nearer to the ideal of the Meek and Lowly, we wil not have lived in vain.[94]

At the 1928 conference Savage, who was already one of a three-man finance committee raising £20,000 for election expenses, was also elected to a nine-man policy committee.[95] The conference reaffirmed in general the party's objective of socialism but the election manifesto omitted any mention of it. Instead a number of less controversial reform proposals were listed: closer land settlement; state support for farming, secondary industries and transport; improved pensions, health services and workers' compensation; regulation of immigration; restoration of wage and salary cuts; a better education system; and full support for the League of Nations and for an international agreement to outlaw war.[96] A third committee, on which Savage also served, prepared a statement, subsequently endorsed by the conference, that Labour was 'not either a freetrade or Protectionist Party' but one that would protect and foster some industries while providing 'adequate safeguards against monopoly prices and ensuring a sufficiency of supplies'.[97] Nash drafted the election policy document, which Holland typically suggested should have more detail and Savage criticised for being 'miles too long' already.[98] In Savage's opinion it should have covered only five topics: land and agriculture, finance and banking, social welfare, industry and education.

The fifty-five candidates Labour endorsed for the 1928 election were drawn from a wide cross-section of New Zealand's male society. They included eight union secretaries, eight farmers, eight unskilled workers, seven tradesmen, seven small businessmen, five lawyers, four ministers of religion and nine members of the RSA. There was only one woman candidate, Elizabeth McCombs.

Because Labour had done well at the 1927 local body elections, had won the Raglan by-election, and recognised correctly the considerable

discontent within the electorate at Reform's handling of the economy, the Labour Party went into the election with considerable confidence. Even some independent observers were suggesting just days before the election that, while the newly formed United Party, led by the aged and ailing Sir Joseph Ward, 'may possibly win two or three seats from the Government', Reform would be 'almost certain to lose a larger number to the Labour Party'.[99] The election campaign, however, was a very dull one and Savage sensed that the anticipated movement of voters towards Labour was not eventuating. He warned Nash against false optimism, noting that 'Just at the moment it looks as if there is a move on to get united action on the part of the Reformers and United to dig me out. . . . In that case I will have my work cut out to keep the flag flying. Ward's influence has certainly not made it any easier for me.'[100]

Both Reform and United finally decided to run candidates in Auckland West, and Savage survived, trebling his majority though gaining less than half the total vote. Two close colleagues, Lee in Auckland East and Bartram in Grey Lynn, were narrowly defeated.[101] The voters dismissed Coates and Reform from office but they did not give any other party a mandate to govern. Despite the Coates Government having its number of seats slashed from fifty-six to twenty-nine, Labour was not the main beneficiary, with twenty-three per cent of the vote winning nineteen seats, a net gain of only five.[102] The United Party—formed from the remnants of the Liberals, some disaffected Reformers and some independent MPs; organised by A.E. Davy, who had managed the Reform campaign in 1925; led by the ill and almost senile Ward; and with a somewhat accidental policy of borrowing £70,000,000 for development—more than doubled its share of the seats from twelve to twenty-eight. Instead of becoming the government as so many of its supporters had hoped, Labour, in terms of seats won, appeared to have been again relegated to third party status and was forced to move from the opposition side of the House to the cross-benches when on 7 December 1928 Ward became Prime Minister.

VIII
YEARS OF FRUSTRATION
1928–33

THE 1928 ELECTION results left Labour with the balance of power in Parliament and provided them with a number of options. Labour and United could form a coalition government with Labour as the junior partner; Labour could support, on certain conditions, a minority United ministry; Labour could vote with Reform to bring down United and force another general election. One option that was unthinkable was to support in any form a continuation of Coates' Reform Government. Most Labour MPs, including Fraser, Nash, McCombs, Sullivan, Howard, Langstone, Jordan, Chapman and Carr, believed that Ward and United had more sympathy for the workers than Coates and Reform.[1] Only Savage, Armstrong and, in a curious way, Holland argued that neither Reform nor United was preferable. Holland was ambivalent, at first unable to decide between rejecting both Coates and Ward, thus precipitating another election, or alternatively supporting Ward fully, though not in a formal coalition. Savage, on the other hand, argued that Labour should not risk another election until Ward and United had discredited themselves as completely as their predecessors and until the Labour Party could replenish its exhausted funds. In the meantime, Labour should allow Ward to form a minority ministry but attack it at every opportunity, presenting Labour as the sole real alternative.

By this time differences of opinion between Holland, the socialist theorist, and Savage, the practical politician, were starting to become apparent within the upper levels of the party. Holland rarely attended meetings of the party's New Zealand executive; one out of seventeen in 1927–28 and two out of sixteen in 1928–29. Much of his time and energy was spent reading and writing rather dull articles, pamphlets and book reviews. At the 1927 conference, for example, he had reported that during the previous year, in addition to his parliamentary and constituency duties,

he had addressed twenty-seven public meetings, spent two or three 'full days a week' answering correspondence, and written several series of articles on the 1926 British miners' strike, on fascism in Italy, and on China, a task that had 'involved at least four hours a day (seven days a week) for a full three months'.[2] Later in 1927 Holland was forced to spend several months in a wheelchair or on crutches because of an injured knee and a septic foot.

In February 1928, when Nash informed Savage that Holland would address a public meeting in Auckland, at which a collection would be taken, before proceeding to Russell to get 'into touch with some of the places of historical interest', Savage was furious. That was not the way, Savage believed, that the Leader of the Opposition and alternative Prime Minister should start an election year. He cabled Nash that a collection would 'not add to the dignity of occasion' and 'I for one dogmatically refuse to be a party to such a proceeding'.[3] He also suggested, in vain, that Holland should spend the extra days in the north campaigning in Auckland, not holidaying at Russell.

When Holland, who had a 'hard and metallic voice', did speak, his efforts were often poorly planned and sometimes even counter-productive. His daughter remembered her pallid, lame, intense father giving an address at Westport during the 1928 election; Holland started talking at 8 p.m. and had to be interrupted by the chairman at 11.45 p.m.[4] At his best, Holland was a fluent, incisive orator who 'could embitter workers against injustice in a way that is hard to believe'.[5] But to even some Labour MPs it was the 'voice of defeat rather than victory . . . not of the goal or of the achievement to be made, but of the conditions against which he led the protest'.[6]

Ill, tired, confused, disillusioned and unable to identify clearly his political and personal priorities, Holland by 1928 had lost much of his drive and direction as leader. Factions based on geographic groupings, personal friendships and shared perceptions of what should be the party's policies and tactics started to emerge even more openly than they had in the past.

In Parliament Labour remained silent throughout the 1929 Address-in-Reply debate in an effort to shorten it. Savage told the House,

> I am not going to waste words or time in blaming any one for the present state of affairs. . . . my appeal to honourable members of this House is that this debate should end to-night, and that tomorrow we should begin to deal with the distress which exists in this country.[7]

As criticism not only of the government but also of Labour's performance increased among trade unionists and the party's rank-and-file membership, so Savage started to assert himself and question both Holland's leadership and the direction in which the party was drifting. He told Lee that he could not consent to a moratorium on political activity just because of 'the illness of one stupid old jackass', Ward. But negative opposition was

Dock Street Mission, typical of a number of voluntary bodies providing food, clothes and medical care for the poor and unemployed during the Depression in Auckland. *Mr George Abel*

The 1931 National Economy Conference, which led to the formation by the Reform and United Parties of a National Government to battle the Depression. The Labour representatives are McCombs, Holland and Savage (1, 2, 3 from right). *Alexander Turnbull Library*

Relief Workers Cheaper THAN HORSES !

"So far as men engaged on Roadwork are concerned, the ideal" must be to move them 'over the fence' on to the land."

THUS spoke the Rt. Hon. J. G. Coates, who with the Rt. Hon. G. Forbes is joint leader of the Government in Parliament. The above photograph is of Relief Workers working under his Department, and shows what he means.

Women of New Zealand WILL YOU STAND FOR THIS ?

This Government professes to save your country, but reduces your sons, your husbands, your brothers to the cheapness of horses. It is in YOUR power to effect a change in Government by voting LABOUR and let New Zealand be once again *"God's own Country."*

'Relief Workers Cheaper Than Horses!', a Labour advertisement used at the 1931 election. *Alexander Turnbull Library*

'To Keep these Doors Open'. Labour in 1931 argued that the National Government would close the schools as an economy measure if re-elected. *Alexander Turnbull Library*

Savage reading a book on the steps of his home in Salisbury Street. *Weekly News*

Auckland West Electorate,
1931.

J. SAVAGE, M.P., Respectfully Solicits your Vote and Interest.

SAVAGE for WEST

Savage's 1931 election card

The 1933 Labour Caucus welcomes Mrs Elizabeth Reid McCombs (seated) as MP for Lyttelton and the first woman elected to the New Zealand Parliament. Holland, who died shortly after, is seated left, Savage is seated second from the right, and Lee is standing second from the left. *Weekly News*

insufficient and unworthy so that, supported by others such as Jordan, Savage argued that 'we should not content ourselves with pointing out the ill effects of United rule, but we should proceed to deal with the big questions which underly present conditions'.[8]

After a by-election in Parnell in April-May 1930—in which Labour's candidate Bloodworth, whom the Alliance of Labour sought to remove, came third—Savage on his own initiative cabled the Prime Minister, George Forbes, who had replaced Ward, requesting the urgent calling together of Parliament to deal with the Depression. The definite downturn in export prices was accompanied by a frightening upturn in unemployment, which was to increase more than five-fold between September 1930 and March 1931. Fearing such a development, Savage told Forbes,

> The unemployed problem has reached a desperate stage in Auckland. Numbers, running into thousands, are either wholly or partially unemployed. Their families are not getting sufficient to eat and winter is upon them. . . . Men, and women too, want work and are willing to face anything. They are human and must be fed and housed. What will the Government do to give relief? It is no use talking about next year. People are starving now.[9]

He promised the Prime Minister that Labour 'will do anything under the sun that will help to relieve the position'.

The Labour Party as a whole, however, did not respond to Savage's urgent pleading. No Labour candidates were nominated for by-elections in Western Maori, Invercargill and Waipawa. Queries as to why Labour was not taking a more aggressive stand inside and outside Parliament were met with the reply that 'the Executive did not view with favour the idea of putting out the Government irrespective of consequences'.[10]

In January 1931, annoyed with having to repudiate suggestions that 'he had offered an apology for the work of the Parliamentary Labour Party', Savage telegrammed Holland and insisted on a meeting of caucus to discuss the worsening economic situation.[11] The same day Savage wrote to Nash, who had been elected to Parliament at a by-election for Hutt at the end of 1929, telling him, 'we cannot afford to wait any longer before challenging the Government to do something or get out. . . . it will be in the interests of those we represent if we can muster sufficient courage and intelligence to give a lead towards the light'.[12] A few weeks later he again wrote to Nash that it was not sufficient merely to oppose the government.

> My own opinion is that this is not the time for striking one's breast and repeating wellworn phrases. The present desperate situation demands well thought out proposals, and not too many of them. . . . We can do it. It was done at the Finance Act 1917 when . . . we needed the money to carry on the work of destruction. . . . I would compel every receiver of an income of £500 or upwards to assist—on a graduated scale—loans which would be used solely for industrial purposes. I would limit the amount of interest to 4½ per cent. Boiled down my idea comes to this:

> Raise the revenue necess[ary] to meet current charges by a surcharge on incomes. After that take the power to compel people to lend their wealth for the further devel[opment] of the country.[13]

When Holland, however, finally moved a no-confidence motion in Parliament in March it was lost 20–50 when Reform voted with the United Government.

Savage was observing at first hand the suffering caused by the Depression. In July 1927 the hospital board's Relief Committee, of which Savage had again become a member, dealt with 145 cases of destitution caused by unemployment out of a total number of 329, the causes of which also included desertion, sickness and old age. By July 1931 the number of people requesting charitable aid as the result of unemployment had risen to 1089 out of 1424 cases dealt with by the committee that month. The Relief Committee, which was instructd by the board that 'all persons in need will be relieved',[14] paid arrears of rent to prevent eviction; provided groceries, milk and occasionally meat to hungry families; distributed secondhand boots, clothing and blankets; contributed the potatoes and bread used in various soup kitchens organised by church groups; donated medical supplies to the Dock Street Mission; and paid the levy on unemployed men seeking work. In the first six months of 1931 alone Savage's committee also paid the funeral expenses of 300 destitute people.

As the Depression deepened, the board's Fees Committee, on which Savage also served, found itself having to write off tens of thousands of pounds in unpaid hospital fees. Savage became the leading opponent of payment for hospital treatment and strenuously criticised a suggestion made by the Australasian College of Surgeons that wards for private-paying patients should be encouraged in public hospitals.[15] Again and again he objected to first- and second-class accommodation and treatment. Hospitals had a duty to 'give treatment according to the physical condition of the patients, and not according to their ability to pay'.[16] Hospital beds and nursing attention should be free, and doctors paid by the state should replace honorary surgeons. Charitable aid should be divorced from hospital boards and handed over to a government pensions department. In short, 'The hospital should be made a place for the treatment of disease of the human body. The body politic should correct its wrong-doing through the pension system.'

In hospital board matters generally, Savage was very active. He represented the board at Hospital Boards' Association conferences, meetings with Auckland voluntary social workers, and in negotiations with the government. In April 1930 he moved 'that subsidiary hospitals be established in South Auckland and in a central site in the Northern Boroughs' and that the board immediately visit suitable properties. He recommended the provision of a sun-room in the children's hospital; tried unsuccessfully to allow a spokeswoman on chiropractic to address the

board; seconded a donation for relief after the Hawke's Bay earthquake; voted against state art unions as a means of funding hospitals; supported the board's paying for children's food to be distributed through the Plunket Society; moved that there be further provision of dental treatment for patients; and wanted quality control of the milk supplied to the hospital rather than the acceptance of the lowest tender.[17]

In July 1932 the board's Finance Committee, in an effort to cut expenditure, recommended a reduction in staff, the closing of 100 beds, and the earliest possible discharge of patients.[18] Savage predictably led the opposition to the proposals. He requested a special meeting of the board and further consultation not only with the medical superintendent but also with the lady superintendent, the board engineer and the chief gardener.

At the special meeting on 2 August 1932 Savage moved the rescinding of a motion terminating the services of three nursing sisters. He then opposed the closing of the junior medical officers' residence, the recommendation of the Finance Committee to that effect being lost. Expenditure on the hospital gardens was cut by a third and Savage congratulated the engineer on economising without sacrificing efficiency. The major battles were over the reduction in beds and the discharging of patients as soon as possible. Savage's motion that 'no patient requiring continuous medical or surgical attention be discharged without authority from the Board' was defeated, only one other member supporting him.

Savage continued to resist retrenchment and the reduction in hospital staff and services, and sought to reinstate or raise the salaries and honoraria paid to those still employed by the board. At a meeting in September 1933, for example, supported only by Mrs Mary Dreaver, who had joined him as a second Labour voice on the board, Savage moved the restoration of all ten per cent cuts made two years before.[19] Increasingly he proposed wide-ranging reforms of both the charitable aid and health systems. He successfully moved a series of major motions asking the board to inform the government that relief payments to those in need were inadequate 'for providing the necessaries of life' and that, because 'increased rates or other forms of additional taxation for relief purposes are uneconomic and likely to lead to wholesale national bankruptcy', they 'should be superseded by the careful use of public credit for the purpose of carrying out approved plans of Local Body and National works, at rates of wages that will enable workers to pay their way'.[20]

At a subsequent meeting Savage moved, this time unsuccessfully, 'That in the opinion of this Board, steps should be taken to establish a national health service based upon Universal Health Insurance; and co-ordinating all forms of medical, dental, nursing and kindred services, with payment for services rendered, and providing full medical service to all, irrespective of income'.[21]

Although the board recorded its pleasure that Savage, following his

election as Labour's leader in October 1933, intended to remain a member of the board and although he continued to attend some meetings of both the board and the Relief Committee, his absences became more frequent and he did not seek re-election in May 1935. At his last meetings Savage finally persuaded the board to support the immediate restoration of the ten per cent wage cuts imposed on its employees four years before.[22]

When faced with those in need, Savage was generous not only with public funds. People constantly appeared at the door of his house seeking clothes, food or money. Savage was a frugal man, who, although always neat and tidy, did not spend a great deal of money on clothes or other personal possessions. Within a short time he was reduced to one suit and one pair of shoes. Aruba remembered an occasion when an unemployed man was at the door asking her mother for clothing. When Savage called out to give him something, Mrs French replied that there was nothing left in Savage's wardrobe to give except the clothes he was wearing.[23]

Aruba also remembered countless people coming to the door, often on a Sunday, seeking food for their families. Sometimes Savage's generosity meant that the French's Sunday dinner would disappear from the kitchen before it was even prepared, and at least once Savage took the cooked roast out of the oven and gave it away, leaving himself and the French family to make do with Saturday's leftovers.

Frequently Savage gave men money to buy food for their families or to pay their fares to a job. When criticised by his friends for being too trusting and for often being duped by men who simply wanted money for booze, Savage replied that what men or women did with the money he gave them was their responsibility, not his; but whether he gave to someone apparently in need or turned them away empty-handed was his responsibility. On one occasion a man with seventeen children and known to be very fond of drink asked Savage for a loan of the not inconsiderable amount of £10. Despite warnings, Savage lent the money. When a week or so later the man returned to repay the loan, Savage thanked him, told him to keep it for the family, and observed that the man was the only one who had ever come back to repay a handout.

Not all those that Savage helped were as honest or as deserving. On another occasion Miss Molly Nolan, the Auckland LRC office secretary, was working alone in the office when two very rough and threatening men just released from Mount Eden gaol came in and demanded money. A frightened Miss Nolan told them that there was none in the office and they then asked where Savage lived and left. A short time later Savage rang to say that he was worried about Miss Nolan being alone in the office with two such men. He didn't mind helping such people but he was concerned at her being exposed to potential danger.[24]

Savage invariably arrived home depressed from hospital board or Relief Committee meetings. He also observed that returning to Auckland from Parliament each weekend and having to 'meet a queue of starving people

. . . makes one's blood boil'.[25] The daily inflow of mail added to his burden of compassion and frustration. An aged widow, whose home was being sold up, pleaded, 'Please Mr Savage do something as I am worrying myself sick, it is an awful fix to be in'.[26] An unemployed man complained, 'I am willing to do any work as long as I can get home at night. . . . the Labour Bureau have offered me nothing but camp work and as my wife is not well enough to leave I cannot take it'.[27] Another man told Savage, 'I am a Relief Worker earning 25/- per week to support myself, wife and grown up out of work daughters. . . . for God's sake try and make our life at least bearable'.[28]

Because Savage and her parents rarely went out in the evenings, Aruba, in an effort to take Savage's mind off the suffering and cheer him up, shouted the family to the pictures one evening. Savage so enjoyed the film, *Broadway Melody*, that the following week he took everyone to see *Disraeli*. What looked like becoming a regular weekly outing stopped, however, the third week when the film was so dreadful that Savage could not be persuaded to go again.

Instead, he preferred to spend his nights at home, typing letters and speeches in his office-study; sitting in front of the fire reading books; occasionally enjoying a game of crib; and listening to his wireless receiver. From the earliest days of broadcasting in New Zealand about 1921 and especially after the advent of the first regular broadcasts from 1YA in 1926, Savage was a radio enthusiast, his receiving equipment, specifically mentioned in his will, becoming a prized possession. Savage enjoyed all radio programmes, particularly comedies such as 'The Two Black Crows', but his favourite was wrestling, to which he listened while lying on the floor with his ear close to the receiver.

Savage was not only an avid listener to radio but a firm opponent of government control and censorship of the new medium of communication. From as early as 1927 he commented on broadcasting frequently inside and outside the House, arguing that 'a public service ought to be controlled by the public in the public interest. A public service controlled by a private corporation may put private financial interests before the interests of the public'.[29] Savage's concept of 'public' did not at first necessarily mean completely state-owned radio. He gladly accepted an invitation from Ray Eady, one of the proprietors of Lewis Eady's Radio 1ZR—among whose broadcasters was the Auckland Methodist city missioner, Rev. Colin Scrimgeour (Uncle Scrim)—to become chairman of and spokesman for the Radio Listeners' League. The league, which had about 1000 members, was established in 1930 to mobilise the listening public in defence of the privately owned 'B' radio stations, which the government, by rigid monitoring of the prohibition on advertising, was trying to close down.[30]

1929 was an eventful year in the life of the Savage household. His niece May, who had visited her uncle the previous year, returned for a

second extended holiday. On her first visit Savage had asked her to stay in New Zealand or at least return the following year. Twelve months later May received a cable from Savage notifying her that a pre-paid return ticket to New Zealand was waiting for her at the Sydney office of the Union Steamship Company. May spent several months with her uncle, whom she found to be incredibly busy but at the same time rather lonely. Savage took his niece to stay with his friends Jack and Mollie Lee at the hotel they were managing in Rotorua. Years later May remembered that holiday: Lee's warm welcome; Savage only half-jokingly telling Webb to make sure he behaved himself when alone with May; and how Savage chided her for going on her own to early Sunday Mass when, if she had only mentioned it, he would have been happy to have accompanied her.[31] 1929 was also the year in which Aruba French married and with her husband, Don Alfrey, honeymooned in Australia, visiting Savage's family and some of the places associated with his early life. In the same year Elizabeth French, who was never very strong and who suffered from high blood pressure, was stricken with the first of five strokes that were to afflict her for the remainder of her life. The first left her paralysed and speechless, although in time she recovered the use of both her body and voice.

As the Depression worsened, partly as a result of the government's ruthless reduction of public expenditure, representatives of all three parties in Parliament met together for three weeks in September 1931 to discuss a common approach to the crisis. Holland, Savage and McCombs represented Labour. On Friday 18 September 1931, following a secret meeting from which Labour was excluded, the United and Reform Parties formed a coalition National Government. Savage was particularly scathing about the way in which the new government had come into existence, describing the agreement as 'underground engineering'.[32] Holland immediately read out in Parliament Labour's specific proposals for countering the Depression, proposals that reflected Savage's persistent efforts and arguments.

A few months later the new National Government was endorsed at the 1931 general election. Despite the Depression, despite the polarisation of the political system, and despite polling more votes than either of the two parties in the coalition, Labour, which contested fifty-three of the eighty seats, won only twenty-four. In Auckland Savage easily held Auckland West, gaining more than three times the vote of either of his opponents and securing the only Labour majority over 4000. But he had only a few days in which to enjoy his personal election victory.

At the end of 1931 Savage, who claimed that 'up to that time—just on 60 years, I have never been in the hands of a medical man', was taken ill.[33] Aruba remembered that on that occasion Savage had an appointment at his house with a woman, who stayed for an hour listing a series of complaints. When the woman left, Savage retired to his bedroom,

where Aruba found him in agony. His wry response to her concern was 'that woman would give anyone a belly-ache'.[34] The 'belly-ache' did not go away.

Savage was admitted to Auckland Hospital and Elizabeth French notified Labour's national executive that he was incapacitated.[35] Several weeks later Jordan reported to Nash that 'Joe is far from well although shows a lot of courage'.[36] The illness persisted throughout the early months of 1932, causing Savage to miss the opening of Parliament and the 1932 NZLP conference, at which the executive expressed its regret and its hope for Savage's early recovery and resumption of activities.[37] Savage's doctors could not ascertain the exact cause of the pain and Savage recorded that 'after being X-rayed four times I was turned out just about as wise as when I went in [to hospital]'.[38] The mysterious abdominal pains, possibly caused by a polyp that gave complications and could subsequently have become malignant, had left him and for a time Savage was again able to claim, 'I am as fit as a fiddle'.[39] Over the following eight years, however, the symptoms were to recur with increasing ferocity, though Savage rarely complained even to those closest to him.[40]

One thing Savage did complain about was the activity of members of the New Zealand Communist Party and those who held up the Soviet Union as the ultimate society, or at the very least an experiment in state planning worth considering in the light of international capitalism's apparent failure. It was Savage's branch, Auckland West, that in 1926 had successfully moved the remit by which conference excluded members of the Communist Party from the Labour Party. In 1933 conference decided that the ban should extend to members of an organisation known as the Friends of the Soviet Union, which had issued a circular criticising 'the reactionary policy' and 'Social Fascist leadership' of the Labour Party and 'Labour Party sabotage of [the] working class struggle'. After representations from the FSU, the NZLP Central Executive resolved not to implement the conference resolution. Although Holland, who had some sympathy for the Soviet Union and who was also trying to convert the communist-influenced West Coast Miners' Union to support Labour, expressed no opinion on the matter, Savage immediately wrote to Thorn, the national secretary.

> I desire to enter my strongest protest against the decision 'to suspend action in connection with the Labour Party Conference resolution re membership of the F.S.U.'. . . . The Labour Party, and its Parliamentary representatives in particular, are still being damned with Bell, Book and Candle at F.S.U. meetings held every Sunday in Auckland. . . . The Auckland Branch of the F.S.U. never finds time to condemn anyone but Labour members. . . . the evidence is overwhelming in favour of insisting that members of the Labour Party shall not be members of the F.S.U.[41]

Savage's letter, supported by another from the MP for Napier, Barnard,

was considered at a subsequent meeting of the central executive, which, after consulting with all members of the full executive, rescinded its earlier decision and agreed to expel FSU members.

Savage opposed the CPNZ and the FSU not only because of their constant criticism of the Labour Party but because he also recognised that the two parties represented diametrically opposed positions. Labour was appealing to all the useful and needy people, not just a single class. Labour wanted gradual change based on persuasion and consensus, not a dramatic revolution by a self-appointed vanguard. Labour stressed the primacy of the parliamentary arena and the electoral process, not the industrial arena and the tactics of social disruption. Labour believed, unlike the communists, that through control of the state it was possible to reform the economy and society peacefully in the face of antagonistic vested interests.

Savage was certainly not a Marxist-Leninist. The major influence on his political thinking was a common theme that, admittedly with variations, ran through the books of the authors Savage had read over many years: Henry George, Edward Bellamy, Karl Marx, Irving Fisher, John Maynard Keynes,[42] John Atkinson Hobson,[43] Professor Frederick Soddy,[44] and, to a lesser extent, Major Clifford Hugh Douglas.[45] Hobson, George and Bellamy emphasised the ideal of a just society resulting from the redistribution of wealth; Marx and the European socialists stressed the need to socialise the means of production, distribution and exchange; and Keynes, Fisher, Soddy, Douglas and others advocated by various means the permanent or temporary control and/or expansion of the money supply by the state; but all three groups had one thing in common—a recognition that the problem was one of under-consumption, not over-production.

All those writers recognised the paradox of poverty and unsatisfied consumer demand amid unused wealth and production that was being vastly expanded through the application of science and technology. They believed that many economic and social problems were caused by the lack of a corresponding increase in society's ability to consume, an imbalance caused not by a real surplus of goods but by people who wanted to buy but did not have sufficient money and credit, the means of exchange, to purchase what they desperately needed. All agreed that the answer to economic recession and human deprivation lay in the government taking measures to increase and/or redistribute purchasing power to bring supply and demand more into balance, although they differed in the specific solutions they offered to resolve the problem.

The themes of controlling and stabilising the money supply, minimising interest rates, and concurrently increasing and redistributing purchasing power were reinforced in Savage's mind by frequent discussions he had from the mid-twenties on with an Auckland businessman. Henry Kelliher, a wealthy returned soldier who had exported and imported food and

speculated successfully in property before coming to Auckland and starting Dominion Breweries, had contacted Savage to seek his support for a proposal that the government should buy up unsold milk at a reasonable price to the farmer and give it to all New Zealand children through a free milk-in-schools scheme. The two men, despite the differences in age and background, found that they liked each other's company, that they shared a common and long-established interest in monetary reform, that they were reading the same books on the subject, and that their own views coincided on most points regarding the government, not the banks, controlling the supply of currency and credit. Over the following fifteen years they were to meet to exchange books and ideas, and at the 1935 election Kelliher was to throw behind Savage and the Labour Party the support of both his League of Health of New Zealand Youth, which at its peak had 20 000 members, and a glossy and influential periodical, the *Mirror*, which Kelliher published and edited.

Savage continually emphasised in his speeches that increased production without increased and redistributed purchasing power would only lead to a glutted market; a decline in demand, prices, profits, wages and employment; and inevitably to a snowballing recession. While Savage accepted that the decline in export prices, largely outside New Zealand's control, was damaging New Zealand's economy, that he was 'living in a machine age when the machine is rapidly taking the place of man, when the machine is multiplying production and destroying markets in the same process',[46] and that local secondary industries required protection from cheaper foreign competition, he insisted that the root cause of the economic crisis was a lack of purchasing power in the domestic economy.[47] Again and again during the 1920s and 1930s he drew on the writings of various economic analysts to substantiate his contention, for example citing Keynes as early as 1925 and 1927.[48]

Faced with a halving of export receipts, the government found it much more onerous to service existing debt, and the overall decline in production and incomes within the country made the redistribution of purchasing power through taxation to fund social services very difficult. Successive New Zealand governments, instead of keeping money in circulation and trying to maintain domestic consumer demand, production and employment, followed a traditional deflationary policy and sought to reduce internal production costs such as wages in order to restore profitability to farming, business and investment. Because farmers' incomes were dropping, the government, essentially a farmers' one, also took the view that farmers' costs should be reduced as much as possible and that urban workers should share the lower standard of living being forced on the country.

As the depression and the deflationary policy tightened their grip on New Zealand, unemployment soared dramatically, unofficially but certainly to over 100 000 by 1933. Official statistics failed to recognise the many

more thousands of unregistered people out of work: married women, young people under the age of twenty, old-age pensioners, Maoris, people with small incomes. Many were sustained at a bare subsistence level only by handouts from churches and charitable aid committees.

While Savage admitted that 'it is a fair thing that all citizens should be treated alike',[49] he did not believe that all should lose their homes, farms, businesses, jobs, savings, independence, self-respect or health. It appeared absurd that people had to go without food, for example, because New Zealand was producing too much, or, as Savage noted, that, 'In New Zealand we have professional musicians by the hundreds, many of them on relief work, while the public are hungering for music'.[50]

New Zealand, 'one of the most fertile countries on earth', Savage argued, should be able to insulate its economy to the extent that production, employment, internal purchasing power and domestic living standards were only marginally influenced by external factors.[51] Every man and woman who wanted to work had an inherent right to work and should be given the opportunity to work. Unemployment was not only a denial of that right but a waste of productive resources and a reduction in normal spending power through lost wages and potential consumers. To give charity to people who wanted work was economically unsound as well as humiliating. 'The purchasing power of our own people,' Savage contended, 'must be the basis of our own prosperity.'[52] Retrenchment could only worsen the Depression because, 'Unless the people of this country are in a position to buy what is produced . . . we cannot go on producing' and 'we cannot displace labour and reduce men's wages without at the same time weakening the market.'[53] Men on relief work, Savage suggested, were paid so little that they could not afford to buy boots, and there was hardly any need for drying sheds in the relief camps because, he asked, 'What are the men going to dry? They are just about naked now.'[54] Savage stated repeatedly and unequivocally that men and women had a right to be employed in useful, productive work, which provided them with incomes sufficient at the very least to maintain a decent standard of living and a home and to retain their self-respect.[55]

It was one thing to analyse the situation and to recognise the disparity between social needs and economic reality; it was quite another matter to convince people that there was a practical solution, which would take 'into consideration every section of those who render useful service to society'.[56]

Savage read and quoted Keynes, and agreed wholeheartedly with Keynes's suggestion that 'the first necessity was that bank credit should be cheap and abundant' if the economy was to be expanded and unemployment overcome. But he wanted a more permanent solution than Keynes's subsequent suggestion of increased public investment financed through a budget deficit as a means of offsetting a temporary decline in private investment, thus maintaining or stimulating consumption and

production in the short term. Savage believed in increased government expenditure on social welfare, public works, guaranteed prices to farmers and minimum wages to workers as means of increasing consumption, demand and economic activity. But he also believed in balancing the budget as far as possible through supplementary, graduated, direct taxation; restrained borrowing; and credit creation.[57]

Nor was Savage convinced that the answer to New Zealand's economic problems lay in the monetary mechanism suggested by Douglas and the Social Credit movement, though he certainly shared their basic assumption that what was physically possible should be financially possible. Lee and some other Labour MPs, notably Langstone, Parry, Mason and Carr, found Douglas's critique 'identical with that of the Labour Party' and Douglas's National Dividend scheme similar 'in every sense' to Labour's policy of increased and redistributed purchasing power.[58] Savage, though not as critical as Holland, who believed Social Credit's solution 'would mean disastrous inflation',[59] had serious reservations and joined Holland in stating publicly that the Labour Party 'does not accept the Douglas scheme'.[60]

Douglas emphasised a continuous creation and injection of credit to bridge what he claimed was a permanent gap between purchasing power and production, not a temporary flaw in the distribution of adequate means of exchange. Douglas also wanted an economic system that would provide the basis for individual freedom and a move away from the growing concentration of power in the hands of government, big business, banks and trade unions, all of which he regarded as conspiring against the people as a whole. Social harmony would only be possible when all the 'useful people' were able to enjoy the wealth they created, and that in turn would only be possible when the hidden but real government, the banks, had their financial powers stripped from them and new economic mechanisms were created to increase and distribute money and credit.

Savage, however, argued that the creation of extra currency and credit was useless and even dangerous if not accompanied by a redistribution of purchasing power and balanced by increased production. He admitted that,

> The Douglasites . . . have an idea that is at least a step out of the orthodox rut, and to the extent that it is going to cause people to think we should welcome it; but to my mind it does not bridge the gap from where we are now to a free circulation of commodities, and that is the object of currency and credit generally.[61]

While Savage pressed for an increase in credit, therefore, he made it clear that, in his opinion, an increased supply of money on its own was insufficient; the use to which that money was put was all-important. Savage believed that 'careful use of the public credit through the existing banking machinery for the purpose of national reconstruction' was paramount.[62] 'What is wrong with the monetary system,' he argued, 'is that there is

insufficient money finding its way into the pockets of the mass of the people'[63] because

> I believe definitely that . . . so long as private individuals control finance they control everything else. Banking has become an integral part of industry, and the bankers govern the situation, and whatever steps may be taken by Parliament to relieve or assist industry may be nullified by a refusal of credit by those controlling it.[64]

Savage concluded, reflecting the influence of Fisher and Soddy rather than Douglas, 'I do not know that there is much wrong with the present banking system except the control of it. That is what matters in the finish'.[65] Only when the state, not private banks, controlled the money supply could it be expanded when necessary and directed into productive not speculative areas of the economy. Only then, Savage believed, could there be stable, sustained and sensible growth in the economy. 'Parliament can, and should, be the master in financial affairs',[66] asserted Savage, and by Parliament he meant the whole of Parliament, not ministers using regulations that led to 'comparative autocratic Government'[67] or commissions and boards not directly responsible to the voters.[68]

Savage believed that credit creation, which would supplement not replace taxation and loans, would be non-inflationary only if 'carefully applied to reconstruction purposes' and used 'wisely and economically'.[69] Over-dependence on or excessive use of any single method of funding government expenditure—excessive taxation, excesive borrowing, excessive credit and currency creation—were all equally objectionable and as dangerous in Savage's view as an insufficient supply of purchasing power. 'Artificially created credit must be guarded against', especially, because it was no 'remedy for a condition which is often due rather to insufficient collateral security, a fall in prices, or unsatisfactory farming.'[70]

The Douglas Credit movement, however, could not be ignored totally or easily dismissed as a political factor. Many New Zealanders were influenced during the late 1920s and early 1930s by Douglas's proposals. At the 1928 election two advocates of Social Credit monetary reform, Captain Harold M. Rushworth (Country Party, Bay of Islands) and Harry Atmore (independent, Nelson), had been elected to Parliament. In 1932 a New Zealand Social Credit Association was formed, not to contest elections but to put pressure on the existing political parties to adopt a policy of monetary reform. In a short time the Social Credit journals had a far greater circulation and influence than the *Worker*.[71] Douglas himself toured New Zealand lecturing in 1934.

In August 1932 the Auckland trade unionist Purtell suggested that representatives of the Labour Party, including Savage, should meet the executive of the Auckland Farmers' Union, which, under its leaders Rushworth and Colonel S. J. E. Closey, and to a much greater extent than farmers' organisations elsewhere in New Zealand, was very much influenced by Social Credit views. Because of his interest in monetary

reform and because he recognised that many of the farmers, whom he was seeking to convert electorally, were interested in credit and currency reform, Savage agreed to attend, though he recorded,

> I found great difficulty in working up enthusiasm about meeting alleged representatives of the farmers after reading some of their statements—including the crude attempts of their President. . . . I would suggest that we meet them all the same, even if one has to suppress feelings of violence for the time being.[72]

The meeting was held on 15 September 1932, with Closey, Rushworth, Nash and Jordan also present, and resolved unanimously to prepare a petition to Parliament seeking 'the public control of banking, currency and credit', so that all those willing to work 'should be provided with the necessary money facilities to ensure an adequate standard of living'.[73] Labour's executive subsequently resolved to invite a Social Credit representative to address the 1933 NZLP conference for half an hour, to be followed by a further half-hour of questions.[74]

Inside and outside Parliament, Savage, ignoring peripheral or secondary issues, related his views on economic policy, including monetary reform, to his social objectives, declaring that the two could not be divorced. At Whangarei, for example, addressing a crowded Town Hall in June 1933, Savage asserted that

> The main problem of today is to increase the amount of money-purchasing power in the hands of the people. . . . The rapidly expanding volume of production, side by side with a severe contraction in currency and credit in circulation, is the immediate cause of the present depression. By systematic control of credit and currency, guaranteed prices, and the payment of wages and salaries sufficient to enable all citizens to purchase their contribution to the national production—or its equivalent in imports, an internal price level can be established and maintained. . . . Labour's object is to establish a monetary system within the Dominion which will be based on goods and services and which will be sufficiently elastic to enable it to be used for legitimate enterprises, local and national public works, and social services.[75]

He argued that inflation, followed by deflation, had destroyed New Zealanders' equities in farms, businesses and homes but that it was essential that New Zealand should continue to produce and export goods, 'at least, sufficient to meet the charges on our external debts, plus sufficient to pay for goods and services which must be imported'. Guaranteed prices for farmers and minimum wages for workers were needed if New Zealand's economy was to be reconstructed so that in turn it could provide everyone with the employment, the reasonable living standard, and the social services such as health, pensions and education to which, Savage believed, all were entitled.

Savage's views on monetary reform brought him into conflict not only with both orthodox economists and the supporters of Douglas but also

with some of his colleagues in the Labour Caucus who wanted to go further in the creation of 'debt-free' money than Savage was prepared to approve. Early in 1933, for example, caucus rejected by twelve votes to six the proposal from Savage that a compulsory loan, graduated according to income, should be raised from taxpayers to foster industry and employment. Although supported by Fraser, Nash and McCombs, Savage was opposed by a majority that included Holland and Lee, the latter by that time very much influenced by the concept of 'debt-free' money created by the state for public works, instead of, rather than as an addition to, loans and taxation.[76]

Lee, one of Savage's friends and allies during the 1920s, who had nominated Savage for the deputy-leadership and helped him as an assistant-organiser in various by-elections, became increasingly critical of Savage during the 1930s. The two men differed not only over monetary policy. Lee, a far more impulsive, dogmatic, belligerent and egotistical personality than Savage, began to show growing contempt for Savage's moderation, his willingness to consider non-doctrinaire remedies to the Depression, and his single-minded commitment to politics to the exclusion of literature, promiscuous sex, and the other activities that Lee believed made life worth living.

Savage, on the other hand, along with many other Auckland Labour leaders, was probably critical of Lee's challenge for the Grey Lynn nomination prior to the 1931 election. Lee won the nomination for Grey Lynn and also for his old seat of Auckland East, from which he withdrew subsequently in favour of his then ally, lawyer Bill Schramm. Nine years later Schramm was to move Lee's expulsion from the Labour Party. It was not, however, so much Lee's decision to switch seats and take Grey Lynn, held by Bartram from 1919–28, that caused the uproar in Auckland Labour circles but the tactics employed to achieve a majority in the selection ballot by Lee and his supporters, notably the brewer Ernie Davis and the Hotel Workers' Union boss, Fred Young.[77] Rumours were circulated regarding Bartram's personal financial difficulties, and the Hotel Workers' Union, which Lee sometimes represented at the Labour Party's annual conference, advised its members to support Lee and, with Davis's financial help, paid for taxis to get Lee's supporters to the selection poll. A special polling booth was also opened on the waterfront to maximise the vote from members of the Waterside Workers' Union, which also endorsed Lee.

Lee's selection and the feeling that he had used underhand methods to deprive a former colleague of his seat and job angered many in the party. The 1931 conference, after a lengthy and at times bitter debate, declared Lee's selection null and void and resolved by 49 votes to 17 that another selection be held, organised by the New Zealand executive, not as previously by the Auckland LRC. Lee won the nomination again by 208 votes to Bartram's 108, but the antagonism towards Lee remained.

Although Bartram was expelled from the Labour Party for standing as an independent for Grey Lynn at the 1931 election, Savage, who had known and liked Bartram for twenty years, remained in contact with him for the rest of his life. After the 1931 election and Bartram's pitiful showing, Lee observed, somewhat ironically in the light of his own subsequent history, that 'Grey Lynn has a special lesson. The lesson is that the Labour voter is loyal to his party. Personality counts, but the Labour vote in New Zealand is not to be misled. Our Movement has grown too big for disgruntled individuals to presume'.[78]

A second, and perhaps more substantial, reason for the growing rift between Savage and Lee was Savage's dislike of fringe financial institutions that lent money at high interest rates to those desperate for credit during the Depression. Lee, who thundered from the platform against the moneylenders, appeared to have a double standard. In May 1933, and again just before the 1938 election, the newspapers revealed that Lee was a shareholder in four loan companies that lent money at relatively high interest to workers on the security of their tools of trade or household furniture.[79] Savage was not the only one who thought that moneylending was an unsuitable business for a Labour MP to be engaged in, and various LRCs and branches complained strongly and some repeatedly against Lee, the Papatoetoe branch, for example, resolving to disband if the New Zealand executive did not take action against him.[80]

Also in 1933, Lee spoke in Parliament describing Italian fascism, German nazism, and Russian bolshevism as forms of democracy, albeit distinct from the parliamentary form. He argued that Mussolini's government was a 'democratic dictatorship', that Mussolini was the socialist movement's 'greatest loss' and that, although he disagreed with Hitler, 'while that Government represents the people of Germany we cannot object to it'. As late as 1938 he was to record his approval of German nationalism and the 'justice' of Hitler's desire for unity and for making the European 'map racially tidied'.[81] In two pamphlets on Hitler and Mussolini published in 1940 shortly after the outbreak of war, Lee was still to find aspects of the two dictators' personalities that he admired, notably their strength and decisiveness, although by that time he was much more careful to disassociate himself in general from them.[82]

A fourth issue was soon to distance Savage from Lee. Savage, who remembered with regret and affection how his mother and sister had coped with poverty, adversity and illness, deplored what he regarded as Lee's 'unscrupulous and salacious', and decidedly fictitious, portrayal of Lee's mother and sister as prostitutes in *Children of the Poor*, published in 1934.[83]

Savage had much more on his mind, however, than the cooling friendship between himself and Lee. The worsening Depression and pressure from Savage and others had galvanised Holland into action, and in 1931 and 1932 Holland had toured and spoken more widely than Savage

or any other Labour MP. But by 1933 Holland was again becoming preoccupied with reading and writing lengthy book reviews on such subjects as *Bolshevism in Perspective* and *Red Russia*.[84] Savage, well again after his spell in hospital, began to assume more prominence. His speeches inside and outside Parliament were invariably well-informed, well-constructed and positive.[85]

A typical Savage address at that time started with an attack on 'the deliberate reduction of the purchasing power of the people by wage and salary reductions'; the increased cost of living resulting from the raising of the exchange rate; the lack of credit available not only for subsidising the farmers but also for paying 'every able-bodied and willing man and woman an adequate wage for doing some work that is worth doing'; the banks, which 'are really the government of the country while we are talking'; the huge increase in the public debt; and the reduction by twenty per cent in interest rates for small deposits, 'the savings of the poor', in Post Office Savings Banks while leaving private banks immune.

Savage's proposals were as specific as his criticisms. In the longer term the state should take over the sole right to control and issue credit and currency. Pending that, the government should immediately raise sufficient money within New Zealand to subsidise farmers and pay them a guaranteed price for primary products at least sufficient to cover their expenses. The development of both primary and secondary industries should be planned to create a balanced economy within New Zealand. There should be 'a complete reversal of the deflation policy, and careful use of the public credit through the existing banking machinery for the purpose of national reconstruction'.[86]

As the 1933 annual conference of the Labour Party drew near, the executive, realising that the president, Jordan, would be in England and that the vice-president would also be unable to attend, recommended that Savage, subject to his approval, 'be appointed President' and chair the conference. Although Savage attended the conference, he declined to preside and instead moved that Fraser take the chair.[87] However, Savage did accept one of seven positions on the policy committee set up at that conference.

In August 1933 Jimmy McCombs, the MP for Lyttelton since 1913, died. Savage apparently played no part in the selection of a successor as Labour candidate for Lyttelton. Holland, despite some reservations about women candidates, and Sullivan and Howard considered McCombs's widow, the very able Elizabeth Reid McCombs, who had contested Kaiapoi in 1928 and Christchurch North in 1931, to be the best candidate available. Forty years after women gained the vote in New Zealand, Mrs McCombs became the first woman MP and, to the surprise of almost everyone, turned her late husband's tiny majority of thirty-two votes into a massive 2699.[88]

Two months later, on 8 October 1933, Holland also died, suffering

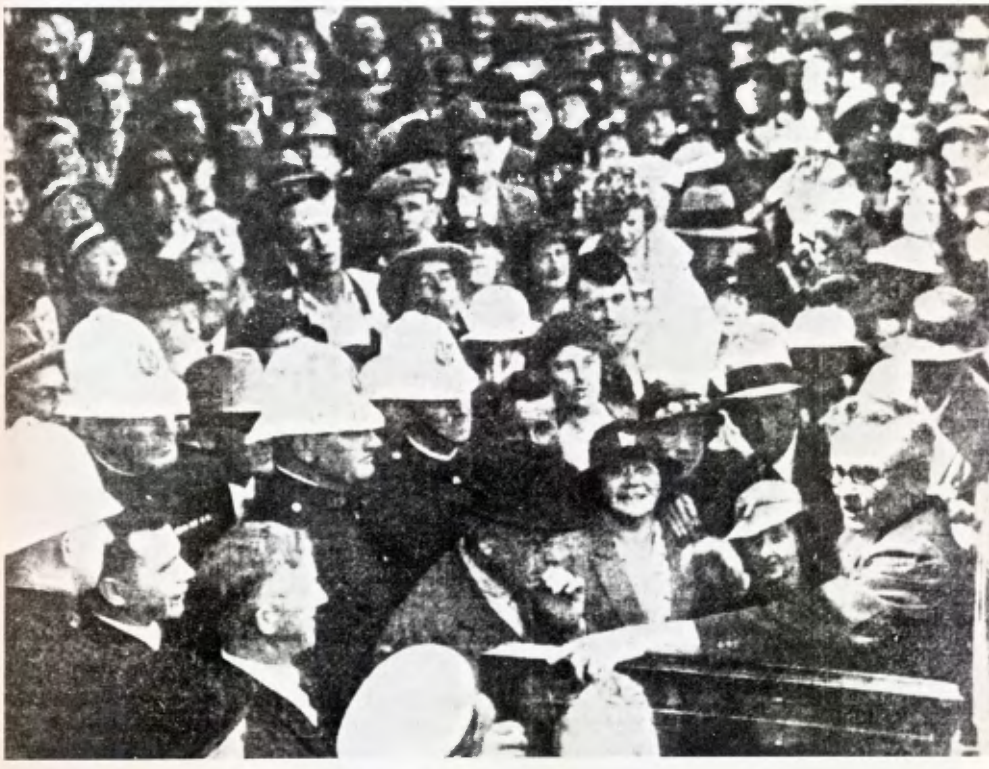
Possibly the best-known portrait of Savage, which, after his death, was to hang on the walls inside thousands of New Zealand homes

This home was typical of many inhabited by Maori families in rural areas during the 1930s. *Alexander Turnbull Library*

Unemployed men queue at a soup kitchen during the Depression. *Alexander Turnbull Library*

In all the main centres crowds such as this one in Christchurch gathered in the streets to watch the 1935 election results posted by the newspapers. *Standard*

Savage arrives in Wellington after the 1935 election to a tumultuous welcome. *Dominion*



Savage with Elizabeth and Alf French in Wellington. *Mrs Aruba Alfrey*

Savage and the French family on the steps of 9 Salisbury Street, Christmas Day 1935. Aruba (front right) is sitting next to Savage, who is holding her son Bob. Alf, Elizabeth and Bob French are sitting at the back. *Mrs Aruba Alfrey*

Savage and Scrimgeour at 1ZB. The smaller man in the background is 'Uncle' Tom Garland, also of the 'Friendly Road'. *Mr Colin Scrimgeour*

a heart attack while climbing a steep hill at Huntly during the funeral of the Maori King, Te Rata Mahuta.[89] Savage, who publicly downplayed Holland's militant socialism and stressed rather his humanitarian compassion for the poor, confided to his niece that, before his death, 'Holland was probably the "best" hated man in the country—by labour opponents, but those of us who were left behind have the satisfaction of having witnessed the greatest tributes that have ever been paid to a public man in this country'.[90]

Although the sturdy and methodical Savage was the obvious successor to Holland, the more flamboyant Lee, unrealistically, had aspirations of his own. He had discussions with Langstone and Fraser, both of whom refused to contest the leadership themselves, though Langstone apparently offered Lee his support if Lee decided to stand. Lee arranged to be nominated but withdrew when it became obvious that he had no chance of defeating Savage, who was nominated by Fraser and elected unopposed. The day after, the frustrated Lee wrote an assessment of Savage:

> Joe Savage. Never read a novel, a poem, an autobiography except it be of Karl Marx, but has read extensively in the technical literature of currency and banking. . . . Joe sees socialism as piles of goods fairly equitably divided and work equitably divided. I am sure [he] never sees it as the opportunity to play football, get brown on a beach, dance a fox trot, lie on one's back beneath the trees, enjoy the intoxication of verse, the perfume of flowers, the joy of a novel, the thrill of music.[91]

Although Lee conceded that Savage could be generous and likeable and was 'a good old fashioned trade union leader', as Keith Sinclair has pointed out, Lee's arrogant overall assessment that Savage 'can be inspired but can never inspire' showed incredibly bad judgement of the man who, with the exception of 'King Dick' Seddon, was 'soon revealed as the only charismatic leader New Zealand has ever had. . . . "Micky" Savage, as the public called him, identified himself with the poor, was indeed one of them. Ordinary people came almost to worship him. In him, ordinariness became sublime'.[92]

Savage himself had few doubts about his ability to be leader. In 1927 he had told Eileen that

> Lack of initiative and independence is the greatest curse in the world to-day. The person who has a normal brain, and the courage to do something, will generally get the necessary knowledge. No one has a monopoly of the power to reason. Bad health and economic disabilities are certainly a set back or a hindrance but even these have their limits.[93]

After years of frustration the opportunity had come and Savage intended to take it because, as he noted, perhaps with Lee in mind, one should 'always remember that if you stand aside as a result of an inferiority complex, the other fellow with half the ability and an unbounded confidence in himself will brush past you'.[94]

IX
'NOW THEN!'
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
1933–35

AS HOLLAND HAD BEFORE HIM, Savage as Leader of the Opposition gave close attention to the business of the House. He was no habitué of Bellamy's except for meals and the occasional half-pint and rarely left his seat when Parliament was in session except when absent on a speaking tour of the country.[1]

Somewhat surprisingly and rather revealingly, Savage's first major speech in Parliament as Labour's leader covered the relationship between Labour and Social Credit. Savage noted that there were differences between the two, albeit on 'minor details' rather than on 'fundamentals', but he believed that

> The Douglas Credit people want to control the credit and currency of New Zealand. They say that credit and currency belong to the people and should be used by the people. They say that the people should benefit to the full extent that they produce. We say that too.[2]

The New Zealand banking system, both argued, should be controlled by the New Zealand Government on behalf of the people and not by private banks on behalf of overseas owners.

Savage did not visit the West Coast for the Buller by-election, at which his old friend Paddy Webb, chosen as Holland's replacement despite some local opposition to his nomination, retained Buller with a reduced majority. Instead Savage remained in Parliament for the 1933 budget debate, in which he again stressed the need for the government to control the money system; to introduce guaranteed prices for farm products; to increase workers' wages; to establish a superannuation scheme; and to develop secondary industries. He reiterated what had become over many years and was to remain his basic economic theme:

> I am going to admit right away that cheap money is an essential element in recovery, but I am not going to say it is the most important element in recovery. . . . We want the money in the hands of the people who have to buy things, for, unless it gets there it is useless. . . . I want it to reach the wage-earners now. It is not a question of more production. It is a question of increased consumption.[3]

Again and again Savage was to emphasise the balancing of production and purchasing power, the prevention of both deflation and inflation, because even 'if people could borrow money free of interest and still were short of buying-power, the problem would still be there.'[4]

Although the government had decided to postpone the elections from the end of 1934 until the end of 1935, there was a new impetus to the Labour Party's campaigning outside Parliament under Savage's leadership. At the end of 1933 Savage had written to Eileen,

> Just at the moment things (political) in N.Z. are swinging between Heaven and Earth. A combination of anti-labour parties who hate each other like h . . . are keeping labour at bay. They had even extended the life of Parliament from three to four years so as to keep us off the Treasury Benches, and we shall not get a shot at them until 1935. The general opinion is that unless there is a material improvement in the economic world in the meantime, that labour is bound to be returned with a majority.[5]

Several months later Savage again confided in letters to Eileen and Doris that although Labour would easily win an election if held at that time, even the following year, 'if I am any judge, we will give them a good run for it'.[6]

Savage started his run early. He was particularly concerned to reach those voters in the country towns and rural areas with whose despair he sympathised but whose continued suspicion of the Labour Party he also recognised. He observed that 'farmers are working more with their heads than they used to', but added wryly that 'the only time they seem to think with their feet is during elections.'[7]

Writing to Eileen and her husband, who were farming in Australia, Savage replied,

> You say you are waiting for a fair deal for the producers. We all are, and some of us wonder if we are living in a madhouse. Some have goods to burn and cannot find purchasers; while others are practically starving because they have no money to buy. The controllers of money are robbing both, but in ninety cases out of a hundred the producers vote with the moneybugs. . . . the producers have been waiting for something to turn up—and voting in the opposite direction. They are, at present, ready to make a change—but unless the powers that be fall out among themselves the elections will not take place until 1935.[8]

Two months later he wrote again,

> Your story of thunder and lightning, hail, rain, etc in Riverina makes one dread the thought of farming under such conditions. And then when

> one thinks about the rigging of the markets and the great money steal that is with us all the time under modern monetary policy, it makes one almost favour gaol as a happy release. When will the people's vision be strong enough and their moral courage sufficiently developed to enable them to declare war on a system that binds them to eternal slavery and comparative want amidst plenty? Surely there is a stopping place somewhere![9]

Determined that the 'stopping place' would be the 1935 election, Savage stumped the country throughout 1934 proclaiming Labour's message with an intensity and an evangelical fervour previously unknown in New Zealand politics.

In February he commenced an eight-week South Island tour with a packed rally in the Christchurch Town Hall. He then moved on to meetings at Ashburton, Timaru, Waimate, Kurow and the Waitaki hydro scheme, Dunedin, Milton, Balclutha, Gore, Balfour, Ohai, Riverton, Invercargill, Bluff, Winton, Oamaru and many smaller places, before returning to Christchurch for the Labour Party's annual conference. In all, Savage addressed thirty major public meetings and numerous smaller gatherings, met party activists, the unemployed, petrol resellers, farmers, union leaders and members of manufacturers' associations and chambers of commerce. He attended social functions and civic receptions. He visited every woollen mill except one in the South Island; numerous other factories, foundries, printing works, quarries and an oyster cannery; land development and hydro-electricity schemes; and the Dunedin and Oamaru hospitals.

Where possible, Savage stayed with local officials of the Labour Party. At the Waitaki scheme, for example, he occupied the tiny spare room in the home of Dr Gervan and Mrs Ethel McMillan. The icy wind from the Alps lanced down the Waitaki Valley, freezing not only the men slaving with pick and shovel but also the women and children inadequately clothed in cotton frocks and threadbare jerseys, without stockings or shoes, and housed in tents and makeshift shacks under the willow trees. Little wonder that accidents and sickness were commonplace or that Dr McMillan and his wife, together with the local Presbyterian minister, Arnold Nordmeyer, the local schoolmaster, Andy Davidson, and a carpenter and union leader on the Waitaki scheme, Jerry Skinner, formed a co-operative medical insurance scheme and all became active members of the Labour Party. Years later Ethel McMillan recalled her first impression of Savage: quiet, unassuming, compassionate, direct and determined, a man the people of Kurow found easy to talk with and one who clearly from his own experience understood their plight and their aspirations.[10]

After the Christchurch conference Savage crossed the Southern Alps to the West Coast, where he held twelve more major meetings in nine days at Hokitika, Waitaha, Greymouth, Whataroa, Blackball, Wallsend, Runanga, Denniston, Millerton, Waiuta, Westport and Karamea. During that tour Labour nearly lost its new leader. As the *Worker*, in a rather

cryptic cable message, reported,

> Returning from Wataroa – after having motored 105 miles to address his meeting there – accident occurred. Savage, Webb and O'Brien, in latter's car in pitch blackness at 1.30 a.m. failed to take a sharp turning, left road and fell 20 feet over bank. Fortunately descent arrested by a tree otherwise car would have fallen another 50 feet into the river below. Car badly smashed but occupants only cut and bruised.[11]

Savage continued with the tour.

Audience after audience appeared to be impressed by Savage's meticulously prepared speeches, which were delivered in a slow, deliberate, soft voice with genuine feeling but devoid of partisan demagoguery. A restricted number of topics were highlighted. Usually Savage commenced with a defence of the parliamentary system of government. Democracy was crumbling throughout the world and it was true, Savage admitted, that 'Parliament made a lot of mistakes but that was not the fault of the machine. . . . He hoped that New Zealanders would never turn down the great privilege of being allowed to govern themselves.'[12] He then, predictably, went on to discuss the money problem; argued in favour of protecting New Zealand industry; advocated the planning of production and marketing; outlined Labour's proposals for guaranteed farm prices and minimum wages; promised a national health service funded by a universal insurance premium and a new pension scheme; reiterated the desirability of free education from kindergarten to university; and suggested ways of restoring full employment. The speech, with only minor variations, was to be given again and again and again over the following two years. When he paused before explaining a point or moving on to another aspect, Savage often punctuated his address with the pugnacious exclamation 'Now then', an idiosyncracy for which he was to become well known.

Returning from his exhausting tour of the South Island, Savage, after a quick visit to Whangarei, Waipu and Warkworth in the far north, spent May and June, in bitter cold and often impenetrable fog and on rough metal and dirt roads, criss-crossing the central North Island: to Hamilton, Te Aroha, Waihi, Thames, Te Kuiti, Taumarunui, New Plymouth, Hawera, Wanganui, Taihape, Palmerston North, Napier, Carterton, Levin, Otaki, before concluding with a meeting attended by 2000 people in the Wellington Town Hall. Along the way Savage met deputations of unemployed women at Hamilton, miners at Thames, and Maoris at New Plymouth. He stopped off at various small dairy factories and isolated timber mills, talked with gangs of railway workers, and at New Plymouth visited the Moturoa oil bore. At the end he told Eileen, 'I had wonderful receptions everywhere, and the people being about bankrupt are ready to make a change. What a stupid age we live in! The people bankrupt amidst increasing plenty.'[13]

Savage was far less satisfied with Labour's impact inside Parliament, where during 1934, as Leader of the Opposition, he surprisingly spoke

somewhat less than he had in previous years. The debates were not at that time broadcast and Savage had little faith in the daily newspapers reporting Labour speeches adequately. Labour's messages had to be taken directly to the voters through numerous public meetings outside Parliament and then, he believed, the ultimate good sense of the majority of voters would prevail. As he told his fellow parliamentarians, 'We might fool all the people some of the time; we might fool some of them all the time; but we cannot fool all the people all the time; and I think the time has arrived when the people are just about awake to what is happening.'[14]

Believing that only the 'big things' mattered and unwilling to waste time and energy playing traditional parliamentary games, Savage decided that Labour MPs would take no part in any debates unless they were concerned with specific proposals to relieve the Depression, preferably by the government accepting his suggestion to reverse completely the deflationary policy by carefully using the public credit. The new strategy was announced at the start of the 1934 Address-in-Reply debate, when Fraser read a statement from Savage, who once again had been temporarily taken ill. Savage appealed to the government to respond 'to the anomaly of poverty in the midst of plenty' by reflating the economy, a policy 'not only economically, socially, and morally sound, but . . . eminently and immediately practicable.'[15] Such a policy was also necessary because, as Savage observed, 'it is impossible for people to worry themselves into a state of good health, either mentally or in any other way.'[16]

Among many specific suggestions, Savage argued in the House for the restoration of all wage and salary cuts; for the newly created Reserve Bank to become a state institution; and for a diversification of New Zealand's export products and markets. He noted prophetically the great increase in dairy products as a result of mechanisation and science which, among other factors, would one day force New Zealand to 'abandon our traditional view of the United Kingdom as a bottomless market'.[17]

The reluctance of Holland and the Labour Party at previous elections to endorse candidates for the four Maori seats in Parliament had been criticised by Savage and, on assuming the leadership, he paid much more attention to the Maori. In 1934 he launched a no-confidence motion against the government on its record in Maori affairs, charging that the cabinet had to take collective responsibility for Sir Apirana Ngata's mishandling of native lands and public funds, and for the Maori people, especially the Maori unemployed, not receiving equal treatment to Europeans. During New Zealand's short history many mistakes had been made by both races, Savage contended, but in the future 'the Maori and the Pakeha must get it firmly into their minds that they must rise or fall together.'[18]

By October 1934 Savage was again out of the claustrophobic and frustrating confines of Parliament and back on the road, first returning to the South Island to revisit the Waitaki scheme. Then in November

and December, in 'swelteringly hot weather', he held a further seventeen major meetings in the North Island: at Tauranga, Whakatane, Rotorua, Morrinsville, Ngaruawahia, Raglan, Tangitu, Ohakune, Marton, Feilding, Woodville, Waipukurau, Hastings, Palmerston North, Upper Hutt, Masterton, and Paraparaumu.[19] Again he visited hospitals, farms, factories, agricultural shows and schools, and met with all manner of people.

Savage kept a look-out for possible candidates for the 1935 election and tried to resolve organisational problems he found. In Palmerston North, for example, there was a vicious dispute between the candidate, Joe Hodgens, and one of the local branches, which was also defying the party's policy in regard to the Friends of the Soviet Union. Savage recommended that, as 'the Branch is a menace to the success of our candidate at the coming elections' and the LRC was also in disarray, 'immediate action should be taken to bring both organisations to an end'.[20] His advice was accepted by the New Zealand executive.

While continuing to cover the topics raised on his earlier tours, Savage often dwelt on his dream of a future when all would be secure. At Tauranga, for example, he told his large audience that

> The fear of poverty in old age or invalidity was probably the greatest of all causes of worry ending in sickness of body and mind, and even death. Under present conditions there was no security for anyone. The comparatively well-to-do person of today may be a pauper tomorrow after having spent a lifetime in attempting to prepare for old age. Able-bodied citizens below the age of, say, sixty years should be prepared, with the aid of science, to accept the responsibility of providing everything that goes to make life worth living for all. That would mean superannuation sufficient to provide a high standard of living for all citizens who have reached the age of sixty years, or who, through invalidity, were unable to provide for themselves.[21]

Again, in his 1934 Christmas message, Savage observed that 'the spectre of poverty and distress of body and mind is abroad in the land and is growing rapidly. There is something fundamentally wrong in any land "where wealth accumulates and men decay".'[22]

During 1934 and the first half of 1935, Savage spoke at almost as many public meetings as the rest of Labour's caucus put together.[23] As Divisional Area 2 representative on the party's executive, a post to which he was re-elected for the tenth successive time at the 1935 conference, he also attended twenty-one of the thirty-one meetings held during 1934–35, five more than his deputy, Fraser, who represented the PLP and lived in Wellington where the meetings were held.

One Labour MP who hardly ever left home and addressed no meetings outside Auckland during those critical eighteen months was Lee, who claimed that his health, specifically 'my war trouble and a severe eye conjunctivitis for about six months', prevented him undertaking speaking engagements.[24] As a result, Lee largely dropped out of sight and was

rarely mentioned in the press, even by the *Worker*, during that period. Not until mid-1935 did Lee finally appear on the campaign trail, offering at the same time 'to compile from Mr Savage's Morrinsville speech a propaganda pamphlet', an offer that the executive accepted.[25]

Within all political parties, not just Labour ones, there are always constant disputes between individuals and factions, some over matters of importance and others over apparent trivialities, some over matters of principle or policy and others over personalities or prejudice. While party activists share general broad interests and objectives, they differ in background, personality, setting, nature and direction of motivation, immediate tasks, vested interests, specific loyalties, perceptions of the situation, and assessment of what precisely should be done and when and by whom. Friction between different levels of a party is not uncommon.

During early 1935 Savage and most other Auckland Labour MPs were engaged in a vituperative dispute with the leadership of the Auckland LRC over the selection of candidates for the Auckland Electric Power Board and the Auckland mayoralty. Bill Jordan, MP for Manukau, who was a close friend and confidant of Savage, decided to stand as an independent candidate in a by-election for the Auckland Power Board after the LRC voted against nominating an official Labour candidate. The LRC then sought Jordan's removal as Labour candidate for Manukau on the grounds that he had refused to abide by a majority decision of the LRC.[26] The LRC was dominated, with the help of the watersiders' and tramway workers' unions, by the Hotel Workers' Union secretary, Fred Young, a tough man with a violent tongue and few scruples. Young detested those he regarded as 'Bible-banging greazers, scabs and renegades'—such as Jordan, who 'rats on us politically'—and told the Wellington union leader Jim Roberts that 'If I am any judge of the present temper of the Wharfies, Tramwaymen and Hotel Workers, they have already had a guts full of the Lee and Parry business [moneylending] and they are not prepared to stand this stunt that Jordan is trying to put over.'[27]

Although Roberts agreed to support Young at the national level, he expressed surprise that Savage was 'sticking up for Jordan', and Roberts was worried that while 'Joe had the confidence of the Labour movement' this 'decided weakness on his part' could see 'that confidence . . . wane away'.[28] It is perhaps worth noting that Savage and Young had already crossed swords over a number of issues, most latterly the establishment of youth branches, which Young vehemently opposed and Savage fully supported.[29]

At a special meeting of the Auckland LRC, called to reopen nominations for Manukau, 'all the Auckland MPs with the exception of Schramm joined forces in the defence of Jordan.'[30] One delegate recalled that a very angry Savage 'really ripped into an equally angry Young',[31]

who for his part recorded at the time that,

> Savage started off and completely did his block; made a vicious attack upon those who supported the resolution and talked about challenging them to a debate before their own Unions, a challenge, by the way, which we will gladly accept. He . . . wanted to bet £5 that Jordan had acted within the Constitution and was prepared to accept the opinion of a Capitalist lawyer, quoting Mr McVeigh, as the legal opinion that he would accept to interpret the constitution of the Labour Party.[32]

Although Mason, Jordan, Parry, Richards and Lee, who according to Young was 'very dirty with his innuendos', supported Savage, the LRC after a three-and-a-half hours debate voted 29–11 to reopen nominations. As Young anticipated, however, Savage was able to persuade the national executive to overturn the LRC decision and endorse Jordan's candidacy. Young's subsequent attack on Savage and the other MPs at the 1935 Alliance of Labour Conference, where Young labelled them 'political fakirs and slimy bastards', horrified other union leaders such as Roberts and Ted Dye of the Waihi Miners' Union, who totally disassociated themselves from Young's assessment.[33]

The Jordan affair had been pushed aside by that time, however, by a second row in the Auckland LRC over the selection in March of Labour's candidate for the Auckland mayoralty. Under the influence of Young and Frederick Martin, secretary of the Brewery Workers' Union, the LRC refused to accept four nominations for inclusion on the selection ballot, including that of Rex Mason, MP, who had stood twice before and lost to the popular incumbent by only 791 votes in 1933. Although on the direction of the national executive all the names were subsequently included on the ballot, the LRC then chose and endorsed its original favourite, Joe Sayegh.[34] Sayegh, an Assyrian, born eleven kilometres from Bethlehem, owned a tea and confectionery shop opposite the Civic Theatre in Auckland's Queen Street, at which delegates usually had tea and crumpets before walking or catching their trams home after LRC meetings. Nearly everyone agreed that Sayegh was an honest and kindly man but Savage, Lee and others did not believe that he was a strong enough candidate to win the Auckland mayoralty, especially against Ernest Davis, who was standing as the Citizen's nominee. They suspected, probably with justification, that Young had been bribed to ensure the selection of a weak Labour candidate to help Davis's election prospects. Mason's position, however, was damaged by Lee, who told national executive members that Sayegh was a dumb 'wop fellow' who could not even speak English. When Sayegh turned out to be a 'hell of a nice fellow', who spoke excellent English with a 'beautifully modulated voice', Lee's slander proved counter-productive and at least one influential executive member was furious at Lee's 'bloody lie'.[35] In a record poll Sayegh was only 363 votes behind Davis and easily topped the poll for the council, on which Labour won fifteen of the twenty-one seats. As a sequel, at

the party's 1935 conference, Young again attacked Labour's parliamentary leaders as 'a lot of swivel-titted, brothel-bred bastards' and Nash in particular as a 'pale pink Bible-banging bastard with Jesus on his watch-chain.'[36] After listening to Savage and hearing the report of a special investigating committee, the conference censured Young, a vote to expel him having first been narrowly lost 44–41 because Nash suggested the matter be forgotten.

Despite the strife in Auckland, Labour's widespread success in the May 1935 local body elections augured well for the general election later in the year. In Auckland City Labour added six out of ten transport board seats and three out of five hospital board seats to its fifteen council successes. Semple won the Wellington mayoralty, with Fraser topping the council poll. Rev. E. T. Cox won the Dunedin mayoralty as a Labour candidate, having been elected two years previously as an independent. Sullivan retained the Christchurch mayoralty.

Savage could have done without the distractions caused by petty squabbling and vituperative factionalism within the Labour Party during early 1935. Nor was he interested in discussing grandiose theoretical schemes that might give those in need 'pie in the sky by and by'. What he did want were jobs for the unemployed and an immediate increase in payments to those most in need. He observed:

> As I speak we have men and women within a stone's throw of this building who are not getting enough to eat today. We talk about the home life, of the sacred nature of the family, and all that kind of thing. What is the use of talking about home life when there is no home, or about the sacred nature of the family when there is nothing provided to keep the family together? What is the use of talking of those things when men are being sent away to relief camps. . . . where we have people in our fertile land practically starving in the midst of plenty. . . . Those people are willing to work for them; they do not want charity, but the right to work for a decent living.[37]

The picture painted by Savage was no distortion of reality, as even non-Labour observers testified. Many families had little food, fuel, clothing or furniture and lived in appalling dwellings. Approximately 54 000 home owners, one-third of all mortgagors in 1930, were foreclosed during the Depression.[38] Men put cardboard in the soles of their worn-out shoes and boots and their children went barefoot. Mothers were too under-nourished to breast-feed their babies and too poor to buy milk. Few young men or women could find jobs after leaving school. Thousands of men ended up in one or other of the works camps, for example draining swamps at Aka Aka near Pukekohe or clearing forest lands for farming at Pakiri near Wellsford, living in tents and receiving their food and 10*s*. a week. Unemployed Pakeha women and the unemployed Maori, male and female, were largely ignored by the authorities. The dreadful psychological impact of being unemployed year after year resulted in widespread despair and

occasionally in an outbreak of frustrated fury, as in the case of the April 1932 riot in Auckland's Queen Street.

One young relief worker's experience graphically illustrates the plight of those without work.

> I have been three years on relief. We live chiefly on bread and butter. The thing I object to is the stupidity of relief work. Your mind becomes so dull and you get so disheartened that at last you lose the ability to work. There's nothing much to live for. You can't have newspapers or picture shows; you can't have books or any kind of culture. My wife can't even buy sugar to make jam. . . . Our baby ten days old died. A friend gave us £1 for the baby's burial fee for the City Council. Then we had to find £1 15*s.* for the undertaker, and it was such a difficult job getting the money that we have now insured ourselves at 6*d.* a week each so that, at death, we will be properly buried. If we can't live decently we can at least die decently.[39]

Another insight into the suffering of the unemployed was a series of articles published in various newspapers and written by the Presbyterian minister at Miramar, Rev. D. M. Martin.[40] For twenty days in Auckland and Wellington Martin lived on the dole and hawked soap door to door. He found that the wealthy tended to slam the door in his face; the poor often apologised for not having much but shared their pot of tea, loaf of bread, or plums off the tree.

Martin reported families who had lived for months on only bread, dripping and boiled potatoes after paying half their meagre income on slum dwellings 'with no conveniences, over-run with rats, ridden with borer, lacking a sink, copper, bath, and the advantage of outside space where the children can play. Boards rotted off the studs, roofs leaked, gutters cascaded in the wet weather.'

Many of the individuals Martin met were pathetically typical of the New Zealanders whom Savage, as the MP for a depressed inner-city electorate and a member of a charitable aid board, dealt with daily. An unemployed Maori widow with a sick daughter, displaced from the land by the Pakeha and forced into the city, offering to scrub floors to put at least something in her empty purse and bare cupboard. A young, obviously malnourished, unemployed dressmaker earing 7*s.* 6*d.* a week doing part-time housework. Five shillings went on rent for a room and a cup of tea each morning. Little wonder that the girl had considered becoming a prostitute like so many other women Martin met who were 'selling themselves under the pressure of poverty'. Another woman with three children, the youngest '30 months after birth only 8 ounces over birthweight, ears are surrounded by sores, arms and legs withered to the bone'. Criticised by welfare workers for having children she could not afford, she had horrified her critics by asking if she should have aborted the baby.

Not only women but men searched hopelessly for work. One wrote 900 letters in six months and another tramped the streets every day for

three years looking for work and finding only a few odd jobs. In a timber-yard Martin found that labourers were sacked immediately if the foreman thought they were not working hard enough. The men were afraid even to visit the lavatory. Little wonder that some of the tens of thousands of unemployed became bitter, apathetic, lazy after searching fruitlessly for work that did not exist. Many more, as they sat cold and hungry in their cheap lodgings, or stood waiting for charity in a line at a soup-kitchen, or accepted cast-off clothing from one of the many church missions, lost their self-respect and dignity. Their hopelessness, their anger at the government, and yet their often wry sense of humour also was well summed-up in a parody of the 23rd Psalm printed in the *Worker*.

> Coates is my Shepherd, I'm in want,
> He maketh me to lie down on park benches
> He leadeth me beside the still factories
> He disturbeth my soul
> He leadeth me in the path of destruction for his Party's sake
> Yea! though I walk through the shadow of the valley of depression
> I anticipate no recovery; for thou art with me,
> Thou preparest a reduction in my salary, in the presence of mine enemies.
> Thou annointest my income with taxes;
> My credit runneth over;
> Surely unemployment and poverty will follow me
> All the days of thy administration
> And I shall dwell in mortgaged houses for ever.[41]

In June 1935 Elizabeth McCombs, MP for Lyttelton, died. Savage travelled from Auckland for the funeral and then returned to the North Island to start a speaking tour that took him to many places never before visited by a Labour leader: Maungaturoto, Otorohanga, Pio Pio, Te Awamutu, Edgecumbe, Opotiki, Gisborne, Tokomaru, Tolaga Bay, Nuhaka, Manutuke, Wairoa, Dannevirke, Pahiatua, Johnsonville, Martinborough, Stratford.[42] In the middle of the tour Savage crossed back to Lyttelton to open the by-election campaign, spending three days in the electorate in support of Labour's new candidate, Terry McCombs, the young scientist whom Savage, Nash and Langstone had chosen to succeed his mother and father.[43] The selection had not been an easy one, the five unsuccessful nominees including Rev. J. K. Archer, a former mayor of Christchurch and onetime president of the party, and James Thorn, another former president and currently the party's national secretary. McCombs, who had helped organise election campaigns for both his father and mother, recalled that Savage, despite his short stature and soft voice, had 'a physical presence—a magnetic aura' on the platform and made a much greater impression than Holland had when he appeared in support of Elizabeth McCombs in the 1933 by-election.[44] Although the National Government's leaders believed that Savage's presence in the electorate 'talking guaranteed prices' would damage Labour's chances and see that particular policy 'well knocked out by election time',[45] McCombs easily

held the seat for Labour, albeit with a majority somewhat smaller than his mother had enjoyed.

The Lyttelton by-election provided an ideal testing-ground not only for the 'guaranteed price' proposal but for many other planks from Labour's 1935 election platform. The party's annual conference in April had been devoted almost entirely to a discussion of policy and methods of implementing it, and Savage had initiated and led the wide-ranging policy discussion that lasted over two days.[4] The detailed election manifesto was then drafted by Nash, at the time president of the party, revised by Savage and Nash in consultation, considered by the national executive, and finally referred to a committee of Savage, Fraser, Mark Fagan and David Wilson, who made final alterations and published the policy through the Press Association early in November. The executive also authorised the publication and distribution of Nash's pamphlet *Guaranteed Prices* and Savage's fourteen-page *The Case for Labour*, which primarily argued in favour of a stabilised, government-controlled money system sufficient to clear production but also dealt with most of Labour's other major policy proposals.[5]

The 'Election Policy' document took a few simple objectives and statements of principle and policy and related them to immediate popular needs and demands. It started by saying that the party's objective was to use the country's resources.

> First: For the purpose of restoring a decent living standard to those who have been deprived of essentials for the past five years. Second: To organise an internal economy that will distribute the production and services in a way that will guarantee to every person able and willing to work an income sufficient to provide him and his dependents with everything necessary to make a 'home' and 'home life' in the best sense of the meaning of those terms.

The four-pronged approach to achieving that objective involved: guaranteed prices to farmers; a statutory minimum wage or salary sufficient to maintain an adequate living standard; a national health and superannuation scheme for invalids and their dependents, widows and their children, and all persons at the age of sixty; and access for all children to education from kindergarten to university. A Labour government would control 'the flow of credit, the general price level, and the regulation of foreign exchange transactions' through a completely state-owned Reserve Bank. Full employment would be a priority but until it was attained the unemployed and their dependents must have their living standards maintained. Production must be encouraged to expand as long as human needs remain unsatisfied, but it must be related to a simultaneous expansion of demand both in the domestic market and through reciprocal trade agreements with export markets. The 'powers of the bankers must be wiped out' and the benefits of the machine age, science and education must be 'passed on to the people in the form of shorter hours of labour

and increased pay'. As the campaign progressed, Savage and other Labour speakers stressed that 'the real issue of this election was monetary reform'. At Te Puke, for example, Savage spoke largely on that theme for over two hours to an audience of 700, who frequently and enthusiastically applauded his remarks. Sufficient money should be made available, he argued, 'for everyone . . . to exchange goods and services with each other without paying tribute to a third party.'[48]

Savage tried to keep the 1935 election campaign as free from personal recrimination as possible. He argued with natural dignity that

> If the impending battle is to be fought on personal grounds, I would prefer not to take part in it. After all, while we may appreciate the individual, he passes on while the institution remains. Life is too short for one to occupy one's time in doing the wrong thing, and I think it is the wrong thing to attack the individual. If we cannot win a battle by fair means, then let us lose it. . . . Of course I shall fight them [the Government] just the same because we have disagreed on political questions [but]. . . . if I have to stoop to conquer it will never be done.[49]

Many of Labour's other leaders and supporters did not share Savage's reluctance to attack the personalities of their opponents, who indeed were very vulnerable to criticism.

The National Government went into the 1935 election with its economic policies discredited; with its leadership and electoral support deeply divided; with many weak candidates; and with an ineffective electoral organisation. Of the government's three most prominent politicians, the intellectual Downie Stewart, whom one of Coates's aides described as a man 'aware of the disadvantages of everything',[50] had resigned as Minister of Finance rather than devalue the New Zealand currency in January 1933. His successor, 'the lonely, isolated'[51] though competent Coates, and the Prime Minister, Forbes, described by one colleague as 'a man without vision, personality, or dynamics',[52] detested each other. The division was recorded by Coates, who only days after the election told Stewart,

> for long enough I have carried this fellow; he is a heavy weight and I feel that no longer can I carry him. I may be unpopular but I have had a good chance of gauging Forbes's capabilities—they are just NIL. He has some good qualities but his capacity is very limited. In the meantime I . . . never can work with a fellow who double crosses and . . . Forbes [has] been guilty of this action. . . . I am dreadfully tired of the so called 'United' fellows—one fails to find a genuine human spark in any of them.[53]

Not only the government's leadership but also many of its members of Parliament were considerably less than perfect as numerous complaints from the coalition's organisers reported. Richard Hawke in Kaiapoi and Henry Holland in Christchurch North were seen as too old, as was 'poor old Bill Field' in Otaki, who 'has become a terribly garrulous old pest to

everybody'.[54] Cecil Clinkard in Rotorua, another elderly MP who had no money or home and lived in a little room behind a garage,[55] was described by one disgruntled former government supporter as 'a pauper in brains, education and substance', who had as much 'chance of being returned to Parliament' as 'he has of arriving in Heaven in the front seat of a chariot of fire. . . . put him on the rubbish heap at the public expense—make him an Hon. MLC'.[56] In Auckland the MP for Remuera, Bill Endean, was described by one organiser as 'very windy and unreliable . . . not quite responsible for what he says or does',[57] while another reported that Endean's addresses were 'pathetic. . . . his efforts can only be described as an insult. . . . Bill is a joke'.[58] In the Wairarapa, Alexander McLeod had a stroke and 'the Presbyterian Reformers' refused to accept his successor, Card, 'as he is a Roman Catholic'.[59] Coates was also told that the hard-working Labour farmer Jim Barclay would win Marsden because the government MP, Alfred Murdoch, 'has not been seen here since last election'.[60] In Waitemata Alexander Harris withdrew in disgust from the government caucus early in 1935 and, after some indecision because of his twenty-four years association with the Reform Party, stood as an independent.[61]

Not all opponents of Labour were as reluctant as Harris to split the National Government's vote. In 1933 many people with private enterprise economic views and conservative social attitudes joined the New Zealand Legion, an organisation led by a Wellington medical practitioner, Dr Campbell-Begg, and attacked by Labour as neo-fascist.[62] In 1934 a right-wing, anti-socialist, laissez-faire party, the Democrats, some of whose most prominent members had also belonged to the legion, was formed by a wealthy but disgruntled businessman, William Goodfellow, the founder of the New Zealand Co-operative Dairy Company.[63] Goodfellow's commercial interests had been directly and adversely affected by government policies, particularly by what he and the Democrats saw as Coates's socialistic state intervention in the economy to control trade, the money supply, and interest rates. The Democrats, whom Savage described as 'something like Joseph's coat, made up of many political colours except Labour',[64] claimed that the Nationalists were really a 'National Socialist Party' and argued that Coates had become 'only the mouthpiece of the Planner Theorists . . . young men who are smitten with the bug of socialism and communism . . . dangerous young men'.[65]

Nor did the Democrats have any faith in Labour as an alternative to the National Government. The Democrats perceived Labour as a socialist, if not a communist, party whose leader, Savage, appeared to them to be 'a dull, stolid man who could not enthuse anybody, who has not the ability to command the respect of his party or even discipline it. The Labour Party know full well that he is a failure'.[66]

Goodfellow was supported in the formation of the Democrat Party by an Auckland speculator, J. W. S. McArthur, and by A. E. Davy, the

onetime hairdresser who had organised the successful 1925 Reform and 1928 United campaigns and whose 'bowler, cane and overcoat mark him out as the best dressed and expensive man in politics'.[67] Eventually, under the leadership of T. C. A. Hislop, the lawyer-mayor of Wellington, fifty-four Democrat candidates were nominated. Nearly all were businessmen, lawyers, accountants or farmers who changed from being traditional supporters of the government to bitter critics of it. None was successful, but one historian has calculated that the intervention of the Democrats in the 1935 election cost the National Government at least eight seats and possibly contributed to Labour winning another four.[68] Various independent candidates also split the National vote. Six seats fell to independent or Country Party candidates and in six other seats that Labour won independent candidates polled more than 2000 votes.[69]

The major protagonists at the 1935 election, however, were Labour and the United-Reform coalition, which had merged formally in May 1935 into a National Political Federation, becoming in 1936, after the election, the New Zealand National Party. The 'Kelly Gang' of Eliot and Ernest Davis and Oliver Nicholson in Auckland worked hard to prevent conservative notables from defecting from National to the Democrats, even to the extent of offering jobs and directorships. But Eliot Davis and other National organisers found it much more difficult to reactivate and structure a grass-roots electorate organisation. In Auckland, for example, the organisation was in 'a very weak despondent state' with 'even many of the Committee' not attending meetings and the women's section 'pretty old in the tooth'.[70] In Canterbury the contrast between 'the wonderful organisation of the so-called Labour Party' and National's complete lack of organisation made one National official remark that he was 'surprised that we are able to hold any seat at all in Canterbury Province'.[71]

Some National strategists sought to compensate for their own poor electoral image by attacking through the media Labour's credibility as an alternative. An anti-Labour press publicity campaign was organised through the Parliamentary Press Gallery by the alcoholic but gifted journalist Bob Riley, who after the 1935 election was to transfer his allegiance and become Savage's press officer.[72] A pro-government, anti-Labour 'Letter to the Editor' campaign was arranged through an organisation known as the Welfare League.[73] An effort was made, following an inter-church meeting in the Auckland Town Hall, which attracted 1500 people protesting against 'unjust and unChristian social conditions', to 'side-track' the churches into a less politically partisan 'Non-Party Five Year Plan' for social justice.[74] Pressure was brought to bear through shareholders and advertisers on at least one newspaper editor who criticised the government.[75] And National offered to finance up to £100 per seat the campaigns of independent Labour candidates in Buller and Westland.[76]

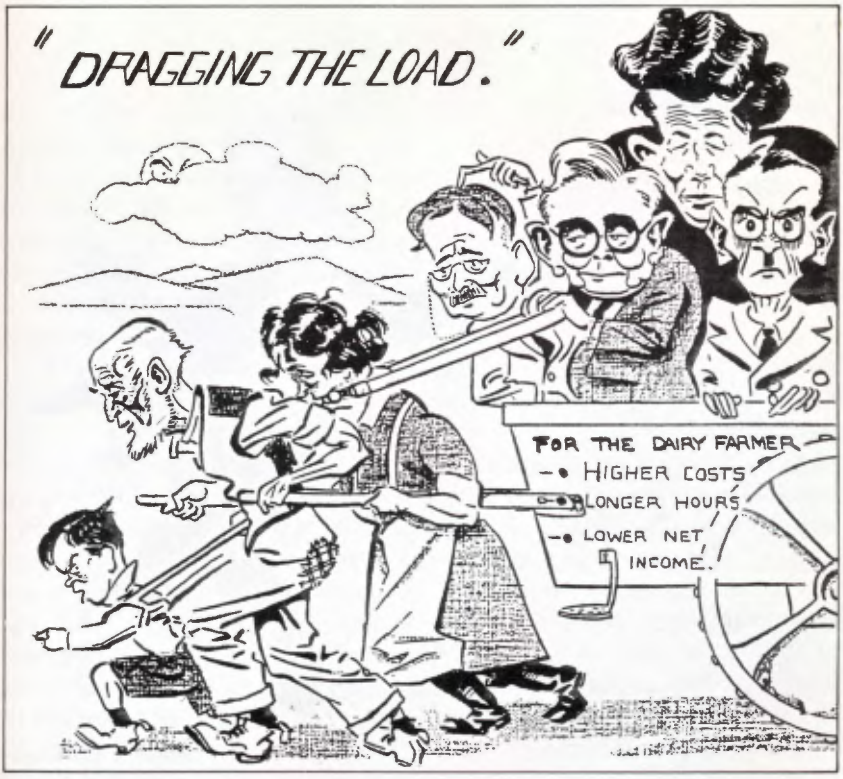
Coates was asked to approach Sir Henry Horton, the proprietor of

New Zealand's first Labour Cabinet, 1935. Left to right: Fraser, Lee, Martin, Langstone, Jones, Fagan, Semple, Mason, Webb, Sullivan, Armstrong, Nash, Parry, Savage. *NZLP*

The 1935 Labour Caucus on the steps of Parliament

Sketch of Savage in *Standard* 1936. The original is in the James Roberts Papers, Victoria University of Wellington Library

The daily newspapers published a number of anti-Savage cartoons during 1938. Here Savage is shown as 'Big Jim' Roberts' ventriloquist's dummy. The caption read 'A Policy Speech'. *Dominion*

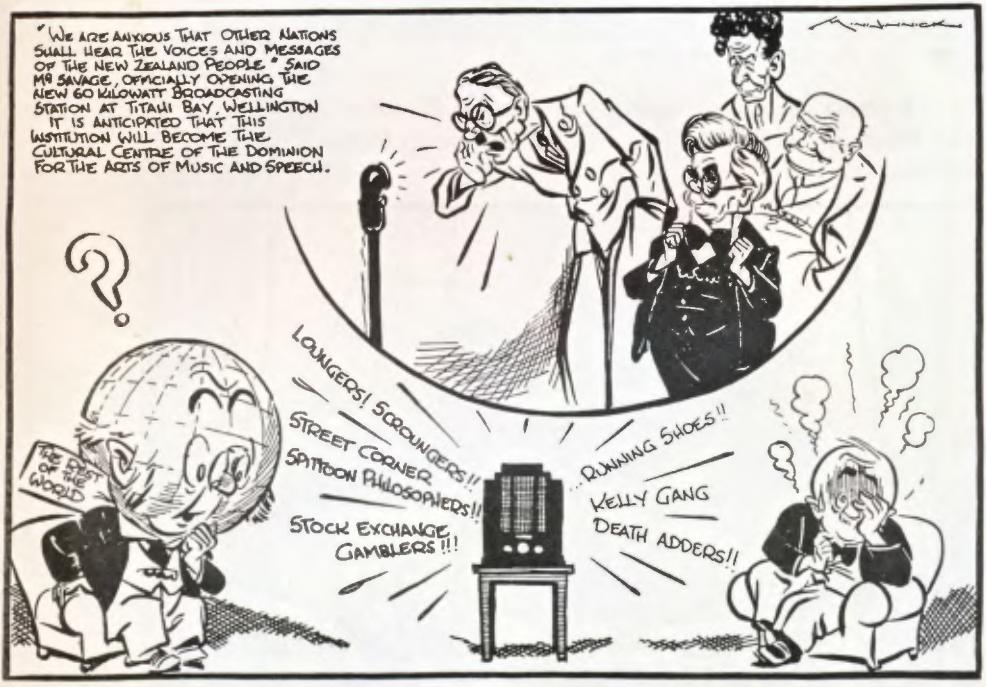


The National Party attacked Labour's leaders and policies with a concerted cartoon campaign at the 1938 election, as this cartoon from *The National News* reveals.

In Auckland, an organisation known as the Freedom Association also attacked Labour in 1938, as in this cartoon from its monthly *Bulletin*.

In Christchurch the National Party's 1938 *Election News* suggested that behind Savage's democratic appearance lay the reality of dictatorship. A.S. Paterson's cartoon was captioned 'An Embarrassing Moment'.

Minhinnick's cartoons in the *NZ Herald* were the cleverest and probably the most telling, as this one based on Semple's colourful language indicates. *Sir Gordon Minhinnick and NZ Herald*


"WE ARE ANXIOUS THAT OTHER NATIONS SHALL HEAR THE VOICES AND MESSAGES OF THE NEW ZEALAND PEOPLE." SAID MR SAVAGE, OFFICIALLY OPENING THE NEW 60 KILOWATT BROADCASTING STATION AT TITAHI BAY, WELLINGTON. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THIS INSTITUTION WILL BECOME THE CULTURAL CENTRE OF THE DOMINION FOR THE ARTS OF MUSIC AND SPEECH.
LOUNGERS! SCROUNGERS!!
STREET CORNER SPITTOON PHILOSOPHERS!!
STOCK EXCHANGE GAMBLERS!!!
RUNNING SHOES!!
KELLY GANG
DEATH ADDERS!!

TELLING THE WORLD.

the *New Zealand Herald*, who had donated £500 towards the government's election expenses, to see if the *Herald*'s cartoonists could 'prepare a set of cartoons to help us, and to knock Labour in the last week of the election'.[77] Savage was to be the target of many cartoons over the following five years. Some, such as the most effective by the *Herald*'s Gordon Minhinnick, were clever and usually humorous. Other caricatures by less talented or more vicious cartoonists were cruelly and blatantly negative.

Minhinnick—who on his first visit by train to Wellington to observe Parliament shared a sleeper with Lee, who to the cartoonist's surprise 'spent most of the night giving me a coldly objective character analysis' of his parliamentary colleagues—was more concerned with Savage's shape than his politics.[78] To Minhinnick, Savage appeared as 'a smallish man with a head disproportionately large for his body'. His high, expansive forehead was made more prominent by the way his thick, curly hair waved at the front and by his bushy eyebrows. Savage wore round glasses and as his health deteriorated in later years the artist-observer noted from time to time the drawn-in cheeks and very grey complexion. Unlike most other MPs who moved around, fidgetted, or were easily distracted, Savage would sit for hours not moving but watching intently, even glowering, at his opponents across the floor of the House. Together with Fraser, Nash, Semple, Webb and Lee, Savage proved an easy subject for the cartoonist to portray.

The suspicion and hostility shown by Labour leaders towards the press at that time certainly was justified, but Labour's reaction widened the gap. Holland, although a journalist himself for most of his early working life, had an obvious and deep-seated aversion towards the members of the press gallery. One who represented the *Dominion* on the gallery for almost thirty years from 1928 recalled that in Holland's 'presence I was always rightly or wrongly conscious of an atmosphere of chilly reserve as if he regarded me as the hired assassin of some institution he viewed with deep suspicion'.[79] Savage, however, although deeply antagonistic towards the proprietors and editors of New Zealand's daily newspapers, had a much easier relationship with individual journalists. They included his next-door neighbour in Wanganui Avenue, the *Herald*'s chief reporter, Bill Lusty, and his son Mervyn, who worked for the *Star*. Another journalist, Geoffrey Webster, who lived in Savage's electorate, from 1935 until 1940 at Savage's request wrote periodically to him 'relating what people were saying about the government'.[80] Another of the *Herald*'s reporters, O. S. Hintz, who joined the gallery in 1935 but who had known Savage earlier in Auckland both as a neighbour and because Hintz reported meetings of the hospital board, found that 'Savage . . . gave me complete confidence whenever I approached him for his comments on political developments'.[81] Hintz's predecessor as the *Herald*'s parliamentary reporter from December 1928 until 1935, Leslie Jillett, had found that

although 'both Holland and Savage were courteous to Parliamentary journalists . . . Savage was much the friendlier'.[82] Jillett recalled an incident that he believed showed the then opposition leader's innate modesty and kindness. Jillett, who was half Savage's age, had arrived in Wellington from Auckland laden down with two suitcases and set out to walk to Parliament. 'I heard a voice behind me say, "Let me carry one of the bags." It was Michael Savage, who, being a more experienced train traveller than me, had only a small bag of his own. So we walked the mile or so to Parliament Buildings with Savage sharing my burden.'

Although friendly towards individual journalists, Savage, like his predecessor, did not go out of his way to enlighten the press gallery about developments in the Labour Party in general or his own electorate in particular. Savage took it for granted that the newspapers were almost without exception anti-Labour. That explained not only his recurrent concern with the concept of a Labour daily newspaper but also his desire to develop radio broadcasting as an essential direct link between the politicians and the people. Savage's friendship with the Rev. Colin Scrimgeour played an important part in consolidating Savage's thoughts on that matter.

Scrimgeour, the Auckland Methodist City Missioner, for a time lived only a short distance from Savage, whom he had first met prior to Savage's election to Parliament.[83] When the government in 1933 finally bought out and closed down Lewis Eady's private radio station, 1ZR, Scrimgeour, with financial backing from Ernest Davis and thousands of Auckland listeners, purchased another station, 1ZB, which had started life as La Gloria Gramophone's 1YB. 1ZB became the new home of the 'Friendly Road' programmes, which, besides 'Uncle Scrim's' own 'Man in the Street' talks, included 'Aunt Daisy' Basham's sessions for women and 'Uncle Tom' Garland's children's choir.

The National Government became convinced that Scrimgeour intended, in his broadcast on Sunday 24 November, immediately prior to the 1935 election, to advise his many listeners to support his friend Savage and to vote Labour. The assistant engineer of the radio section of the Post Office, Thomas Clarkson, was instructed by his superiors to jam 1ZB's transmission using a radio frequency generator and oscillator, which were installed secretly in the Newmarket railway yard.[84] As soon as Scrim started to address the voters his voice was drowned by a loud raucous static. The following morning, before the machine could be dismantled and removed, Scrim accompanied by Mayor Davis and Lee arrived at the railway yard. Despite the Postmaster General, Adam Hamilton, denying prior knowledge, and despite an attempt to cover up by the director general of the Post Office, who was probably responsible for the decision to interfere with Scrim's broadcast, the National Government undoubtedly suffered from the widespread and adverse public reaction.

Savage went into the 1935 election campaign as Labour's major prophet and strategist, believing in July that Labour would eventually win the election with forty-three or forty-four of the eighty seats in the House of Representatives.[85] The party had a wide range of seventy official candidates including seven clergymen, twelve farmers, and twenty-nine mayors or local body councillors. All had to be endorsed by a majority of the branches and affiliated unions in the electorate concerned. As the campaign progressed he became more optimistic and by the time he reached Oamaru he was prepared to tell the candidate, Nordmeyer, that Labour would win fifty-three seats and Oamaru would be one of them. Nordmeyer recalled that visit by Savage not only because he predicted the exact number of Labour victories but also because of the way the packed audience hung on Savage's every word. One of the best debaters in the history of the Labour Party, Nordmeyer ruefully admitted years later that even at his best he had never been able to hold people's attention as completely or for as long as Savage could, or evoke such a response.[86]

In the event, amidst incredible scenes of excitement and jubilation, especially among the crowds packed into the streets of the main cities on election night, fifty-three of Labour's seventy candidates were elected. Savage wrote to the family in Australia, 'I shall never forget election night. The people simply went wild with enthusiasm'.[87] The number in the Labour Caucus rose almost immediately to fifty-five with the addition of two of the four Maori MPs and, as Savage noted, Labour could also count usually on the votes of the two Country Party MPs and three of the four independents. Only seventeen National MPs and two pro-National Maori MPs survived. The Democrat Party failed to win a seat and four Communist candidates polled a derisory 600 votes in total. In a radio broadcast following the declaration of results on election night, Savage assured his listeners that, 'You have nothing to fear as the result of a Labour Government. . . . We intend to begin where Richard John Seddon and his colleagues left off' and create a prosperous 'nation of free people in the southern seas.'[88]

Why did Labour win the 1935 election? Certainly the Labour Party was the beneficiary of the frustration and anger directed against a divided and demoralised National Government after seven years of depression. As Coates lamented, 'The tide was heavily against the Government and the people seemed to long for a change'.[89] The intervention of the Democrats and various independent candidates magnified the size of the Labour landslide. But although Coates believed that the Democrats had cost the government ten to sixteen seats and that the press by its bitter criticism of the government over four years had also contributed to its destruction, he argued that 'the first and most important' factor was the influence of monetary reform, especially Social Credit ideas, an assessment at least partially shared by Lee. Social Credit, Coates believed, had swayed the votes of up to 200 000 people because,

> The Labour Party promised to give effect to the proposals of those associated with the new move. The belief of those supporting Social Credit is fervent and is secular in its appeal. It is the most difficult movement to counter that I can imagine. . . . this was by far the greatest factor in the recent elections.[90]

The vote for Labour in 1935 was not, however, merely a negative reaction caused by disillusion with the traditional governing parties. Nor was it a victory for Social Credit, as Coates implied, although Labour's spokesmen again and again throughout the campaign did emphasise that monetary reform was one of the paramount issues. The electorate's disenchantment with Reform and United, separately or together, coincided with the culmination of a decade during which Labour's MPs had rethought their policies in response to economic realities and social needs. Under Savage's leadership, Labour was able, for the first time in its history, to convince sufficient numbers of voters that the party had the people with sufficient knowledge and ability, as well as the will, to fulfil its promises. By that time Labour had largely shed its earlier class warfare, dogmatic socialist image and was projecting itself much more successfully as a party of social welfare, economic nationalism and monetary reform.

Savage personified the Labour Party's commonsense humanitarian approach based on a sound economy. He spoke with the sincerity, conviction, eloquence and power that comes straight from the heart. More than any other individual, he aroused the political consciousness of potential Labour voters and convinced them that he and his colleagues understood the problems and could be trusted to solve them. Observers noted that almost indescribable charisma that transformed Savage as he spoke from his own experience as a 'hard worker who had known the humility of "begging leave to toil" in a land of rich resources.'[91] While some more educated, more intellectual, and perhaps more cynical politicians and critics regarded Savage as rather naive and his slow, measured speeches as mixtures of slushy sentimentalism and woolly economics, most of those who flocked to listen to him responded differently. As Savage himself pointed out, 'simplicity . . . is a very different thing from being simple.'[92] Nash suggested that Savage's major attribute was 'his intuition . . . which seemed to make him see what was in other men's minds, also to draw other men to him because of his revealed sincerity.'[93] He had the ability from his personal experience, to share the emotions of those he wished to lead; to make conscious the motives and goals of those he addressed; and to voice their grievances and aspirations. An almost symbiotic relationship bound Savage and his audiences together.

Rev. Clyde Carr, MP, observed that Savage had the 'gift of stating profound truths in simple words' and that Savage's hearer 'says to himself, "Why didn't I see that before, I wonder", or "That is just what I have always thought".'[94] Another MP, Rex Mason, recalled that 'Savage in

the 1935 election campaign gave an impression of tremendous sincerity of purpose which dominated the mind of the hearer."[95] His appeal went beyond self-interest, prejudice or intellectual argument and touched an inner emotion, the spiritual dimension, which is awakened by a vision of justice and love. Even his bitter critic, Lee, in an otherwise scathingly sarcastic pen-portrait of Savage in 1933 had recognised Savage's essential democratic leadership qualities. 'The ideal democrat, he advances with the herd; an ideal leader, he has a sense of beyond-the-road-bend, a foresight which keeps him ahead of his followers."[96] Labour's more radical and more impatient members mistook Savage's cautious commonsense for timidity. But he realistically did not wish to create unreasonable expectations with foolish promises that, if not fulfilled, would undermine a Labour government's credibility and future prospects. The art of democratic leadership, as Savage appreciated, lies not in getting so far in front of one's followers that one loses touch with them. On the other hand, the best leaders do not merely go the way the mob might wish to go.

An American political historian, James McGregor Burns, has suggested that there exists a 'rare and creative leadership' that goes beyond identifying and promising to meet the basic physiological needs of followers and potential followers for food, shelter, employment and security, important though those needs are.[97] Such a higher, moral leadership appeals to broader, less selfish values such as justice, love, liberty, brotherhood and sisterhood. It seeks to redefine aspirations and gratify lower basic needs in such a way that concurrently the consciences of men and women are aroused and they are moved to purposeful and righteous action. Savage was such a leader, turning people's needs into rights; their rights into hopes; their hopes into aspirations; and their aspirations into expectations. He spoke constantly about what was necessary, desirable, deserved and possible. He converted the economic and social expectations into political demands.

The leadership Savage provided in 1935 was not simply transactional leadership, the politician bargaining for votes by offering jobs, houses and pensions. A moral but not a moralistic leader he sought to shape and raise the individual and collective aspirations and values of his followers. The ultimate goal was to create a society in which human potential, crushed by the deprivation, insecurity and hopelessness of the Depression, could be liberated. While not ignoring real differences and conflicts within society, Savage refused to play the politics of division and recrimination. He sought to convince and to unite as many people as possible and take them beyond their diverse individual preoccupations to a common dream of a better society for all. The legitimate but narrow self-interest of the unemployed worker, the struggling farmer, the depressed mother, the hopeless pensioner was uplifted into a transcending moral crusade.

Savage's personal contribution to Labour's 1935 election victory was

recognised by many of his colleagues. At least three, Nordmeyer, McCombs and Mason, believed after years of reflection that not only was Savage responsible for the size of Labour's majority but also that indeed without his leadership and incredible public appeal Labour might not have won at all.[98] Sure of his own seat, where he polled seventy-three per cent of the votes cast, Savage had campaigned vigorously but without flamboyance throughout New Zealand for two years. He had no reputation for past irresponsibility to live down and he succeeded in capturing the mood of the people and in establishing himself as a figure of sincerity, compassion, understanding and determination. It was an image that reflected the reality of the man's personality and an image that he was to retain in the eyes of most people until and beyond his death.

Although Savage recognised that his own efforts were partly responsible for the election result, and although he was understandably elated by the victory, Savage was quick to deny that becoming Prime Minister would dramatically change his personality. Indeed his elevation appears to have made him even more reticent than previously. It was obvious from things he wrote and said at the time, however, that he was very much aware of the danger. For example, he told his niece May,

> My head has not increased in size as a result of our great victory. . . . My feet are still on Mother Earth, and my reason is sufficient to make me avoid erecting a pedestal from which to look down upon the people. Without them I'm nobody. With them I can see endless possibilities. I have only one ambition left: that is to empty the poorhouses and see the people enjoying the fruits of the earth. Whatever part I can play in bringing that about will be the only monument that I will seek. I look upon that as the greatest privilege in life and the greatest monument in death. . . . We are in deed making history.[99]

Savage obviously did not regard the 1935 election as the culmination of his more than thirty years of almost total commitment to achieving a Labour government. Winning the election was simply a means to an end. The psychologist, Erik Erikson, in his discussion of the eight stages he discerned in the life cycle, has suggested that at the last three adult stages an individual may become either able to share with and care for others or become isolated and alienated from them; either concerned with future generations and the needs of society and the world in which they will live or selfishly absorbed in the maintenance of personal needs and comforts; either satisfied that one has lived one's life well and productively or despairing because of missed opportunities.[100] Savage certainly cared for others and was concerned for their welfare in the future. He was determined in 1935, and was to remain so until his death five years later, not to 'go down to the grave' having missed his greatest opportunity. The real task of using political power to bring about the transformation of the economy and society was just beginning. The morning after the election Savage sat quietly in the sunshine on the verandah of his Herne Bay home,

sipping a glass of beer and munching fruit cake while he chatted with the *Herald* reporter Hintz. The euphoria of the election night, when Savage, visiting the Auckland Post Office, had been cheered by the huge crowd welcoming every one of Labour's many electoral gains, appeared to have left little impression on New Zealand's new sixty-three-year-old Prime Minister. Hintz recalled that, in a matter-of-fact way, 'Savage spoke without the faintest touch of vainglory. "The people have given us their confidence," he said. "Now it's up to us to prove worthy of it." '[101]

X
THE REAL TASK BEGINS
1935–37

THE VICTORIOUS LABOUR MPs met for their first caucus on Tuesday 3 December 1935, a week after the election. Savage had arrived in Wellington the previous morning to a tumultuous welcome, with thousands of people packing the streets and climbing onto the rooftops and tops of trucks and cars outside the railway station. For months prior to the election some MPs had been lobbying openly for membership of cabinet and expressing personal ambitions for particular portfolios. One newspaper had predicted prophetically that 'No one could envy Mr Savage if he had to allot portfolios without causing heart-burnings, envy, dissension, or perhaps the opposition of a mutinous "left wing".'[1] Among those with expectations was Lee, and during the election campaign he had indicated clearly his preference for the defence ministry.[2] On the train trip down from Auckland to Wellington, Lee and other MPs decided informally that Mason and Schramm would move that cabinet be elected by caucus. They also arranged a pre-selected list of candidates, including Langstone for finance and Lee for defence.[3]

The meeting started at 10.30 a.m. Present were all fifty-three Labour MPs; two Labour members of the Legislative Council; seven members of the party's national executive; Tirikatene and Ratana, who were admitted to the caucus; and Rangi Mawhete, who was to be appointed in early 1936 to the Legislative Council.[4] Savage, who was given an enthusiastic vote of appreciation and confidence, addressed the meeting briefly, paying tribute especially to the work of Holland and James and Elizabeth McCombs. Messages of congratulation, including one from Major Douglas in London, were read. Then came the question of the composition of cabinet. Savage asked whether caucus wanted to elect a cabinet or whether he should select it. It was obvious that many of the new MPs had little knowledge of their more experienced colleagues, from whom cabinet had to come. Mason, therefore, moved and Semple

seconded that Savage should select the cabinet and report back to caucus at 7 p.m. that night. McKeen, Armstrong, Howard and Carr spoke in favour of the motion, which was passed unanimously. Everyone appeared to have faith in Savage's integrity and judgement.

The task given to Savage was very difficult. He obviously had to take into account each MP's ability, length of service, experience, status in the party, geographic location and specific interests. He certainly owed something to the pioneers who had formed the party and sustained it during the difficult years before 1919. Friendship and loyalty were also tremendously important to him.

Savage scribbled down some thirty-six pages of lists and notes as he agonised over this selection and went through four main stages in assembling the cabinet.[5] Eight ministers were chosen immediately: Savage, Fraser, Nash, Semple, Langstone, Sullivan, Jones and Parry, with four places initially left vacant. That gave Savage two ministers from Auckland, three from Wellington, one each from Christchurch and Dunedin, and one from the rural North Island. The possible surprise was Fred Jones, a fifty-year-old former trade union leader who had been MP for Dunedin South only since 1931 but whose active involvement went back to the days before the formation of the Labour Party in 1916. Even Lee was subsequently to admit that as minister, Jones was a fine, if unimaginative, administrator. Savage accepted the desirability of having at least one minister from Otago-Southland. The most talented MPs from that region, Nordmeyer and McMillan, had only just been elected to Parliament and the longest-serving Dunedin MP, Jim Munro, who had served in Parliament with one three-year break since 1922, not only had a reputation for being lazy[6] but had greatly embarrassed Savage a week before the 1935 election by stating that if anyone tried to stop a Labour government carrying out its policy, Labour might have to 'smash things' and put directors and managers in gaol on a bread and water diet 'as some of our Communist friends were dealt with' until they learnt to obey the government.[7]

None of the new MPs was considered by Savage for cabinet, and besides Munro he almost immediately deleted six others: Chapman, Carr, Richards, Coleman, McCombs, and his old friend, the independently minded Jordan, whom Savage decided to send to Britain as High Commissioner. Jordan, described by one close acquaintance as Savage's 'stalwart aide' and Nash's 'bete noire, and vice versa', claimed that 'Joe and I understood one another', partly because both 'understand MEN', unlike Fraser and Nash, who only 'understand MATTERS'.[8]

A minister with farming expertise, a lawyer for Minister of Justice, and a second minister from the Christchurch area were clearly desirable. Savage chose as Minister of Agriculture the onetime president of the Waikato Farmers' Union, Lee Martin, who had been strongly supported for cabinet rank by representations from the chairmen of the Raglan,

Waikato and Waipa County Councils and the mayors of Hamilton, Huntly and Ngaruawahia. Initially he selected Barnard for Minister of Justice. Armstrong was preferred to a bitterly disappointed Howard for the second Christchurch minister, partly because Howard had for some time been incapacitated by high blood pressure[9] and partly because little rapport had developed between Savage and Howard during the years they had been together in Parliament. Howard received the chairmanship of committees and, bitterly disappointed, 'came out of the caucus with tears streaming down his face'.[10]

In his third list Savage replaced Barnard with the longer-serving Mason and transferred Barnard to Speaker of the House. O'Brien, from the West Coast, and Lee were added tentatively to cabinet.

In the fourth and final list Savage replaced O'Brien with his old mate Webb and changed Lee to an under-secretary to the Prime Minister and chairman of the caucus defence committee. This gave Savage three ministers and an under-secretary from Auckland, three from Wellington, two from Christchurch, one from Dunedin, two from rural North Island seats, and one from the West Coast of the South Island. Fagan was added to the cabinet as leader of the Legislative Council. Of the fourteen, six had been born in New Zealand, six in Australia, one in England and one in Scotland. There was some comment that five of the ministers were Catholics, though Savage and Webb were not churchgoers, Fagan had only recently returned to the church, and of the two practising Catholics, Armstrong was married to a Methodist and Sullivan to a Baptist.[11] With the exception of Nash and Mason, they were manual workers who had known the suffering associated with hard toil, periodic unemployment, and living from pay to pay. All had devoted much of their adult lives to the Labour movement.

Savage, who throughout the latter part of his notes bracketed the names Savage and Lee, deliberately limited the portfolios he took, perceiving his own roles as initiator, co-ordinator, supervisor and communicator of government policy rather than administrator of a specific department. He reserved for himself, largely at the urging of others, external affairs, native affairs, and subsequently broadcasting. Fraser, the Deputy Prime Minister, was given education, health, marine and police. The party president, Nash, despite a letter from Lee to Savage opposing Nash's appointment, received finance and customs.[12] The other ministers and their responsibilities were Armstrong, labour and employment; Jones, defence and Post Office; Lee Martin, agriculture; Mason, justice and Attorney General; Langstone, lands and forests; Parry, internal affairs; Semple, public works and transport; Sullivan, industries and commerce and railways; and Webb, mines.

Despite Lee's belief that Fraser and Nash had advised Savage that Lee should be given cabinet rank, and despite Fraser's reportedly strong opposition to the appointment of Webb, Jones and Mason, Savage

announced his decision unchanged to caucus. There were no questions and there was no discussion. Most MPs felt that Savage had chosen 'predictable people'.[13] It was inevitable, however, that some of those excluded by Savage would take the decision very personally. Momentarily hiding his own bitter disappointment, Lee moved and Chapman seconded a motion 'that those selected be congratulated on their selection for Cabinet rank, and that the rest of the Party pledge themselves to give the Ministers their whole hearted loyalty and support.'[14] After that was carried unanimously, a second motion was passed creating the position of parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister and asking Lee to accept it.[15] Savage was sworn in as Prime Minister, with his cabinet, on 6 December 1935.

Although only the Wellington newspapers of all those in the four main centres had included Lee in their lists of likely ministers[16] and although most MPs were not surprised at his exclusion, Lee, never one to have doubts about his own ability and merit, certainly had wanted and expected a cabinet post.[17] His aggressively ambitious wife, Mollie, hoped that at the very least her husband would be offered the post of High Commissioner in London, which Lee would probably have taken.[18] When Savage had first suggested to Lee that he become under-secretary to the Prime Minister, Lee treated it as a bad joke. He was subsequently persuaded to accept. Lee had time on his side. He was only forty-four and none of Savage's ministers was under fifty; the average age was fifty-seven. The thought that more ministers might soon be needed held out some hope, and Lee was also forced to admit that there were good reasons for Parry and Mason being included. He also acknowledged that it would have been difficult for Savage, who was in Lee's opinion at that time 'tremendously sincere though a plodder', who 'will come to be looked upon as the descendant of Seddon', to appoint a fourth Auckland minister.[19]

At the end of the caucus at which cabinet was announced, Langstone and a national executive member, Peter Butler, invited Lee to join them for a cup of tea at Butler's home. Lee 'appeared to be in a sort of trance' but, according to Butler, 'without replying he came with us and on reaching our Model A Ford slumped into the back seat'.[20] When they reached Butler's house, 'Lee, his tea untouched, had huddled against the window sill, muttering incoherently against no-one in particular. I became uneasy and my wife a little alarmed.'[21] Langstone explained to Butler how shattered Lee was at not being included in the cabinet. Although Langstone and Butler tried to console Lee, they were unable to lift him out of his deep despondency and self-pity.

Lee could not accept his exclusion gracefully and subsequently complained to many others about it. He expressed particularly his resentment against Savage for preferring Jones as Minister of Defence. One of those confidants, Harry Holland's son Roy, believed that Lee's

undying vendetta against Savage started with that incident and Lee's friend and lieutenant, Norman Douglas, later claimed that he had never heard Lee criticise Savage until after the selection of the cabinet.[22] As the perceived injustice festered, Lee, who regarded Savage as his inferior in every way, increasingly saw the Prime Minister not only as the man who had for the basest of motives left him out of cabinet but also as the person holding the very post and enjoying the wide public popularity Lee thought should be rightfully his. Lee's prospects of successfully challenging Fraser for the party's leadership in the future when Savage retired or died were also considerably reduced by his not being a member of cabinet. Within days of the cabinet's selection, Lee confided to his wife, 'Can see myself emerging from it all as the leader of the revolutionary faction'.[23] One of Lee's closest caucus friends, Morgan Williams, recalled that from that first caucus Lee 'was bitterly disappointed. . . . and it was not long before he began moving among the new members stirring up dissatisfaction'. Terry McCombs, who often shared a pot of tea with Lee in Bellamy's, believed that Lee's disappointment and his frustrated desire to be recognised not just as a minister but as the leader led to his digging up policies and issues and recruiting allies to oppose and embarrass Savage.[24] Another of Lee's allies, Nordmeyer, has recorded that Lee 'started immediately almost a vendetta against Joe' and 'became almost a pathological case himself.'[25] The undoubted abilities Lee had shown as a fighting critic in the opposition before 1935 were, after that time, turned against his own colleagues.

The new Prime Minister did not want a cleavage between the senior and newer and younger members of caucus. At the 1935 Labour Party conference and again throughout the 1935 election campaign, Savage had suggested that all Labour MPs should be involved in the business of government through caucus teams replacing royal commissions and appointed boards and working with ministers to help make and administer policy.[26] This would recognise the party's egalitarian principles and lay the foundation for team spirit, as well as making government, he believed, more effective and more accountable to the people by providing a close check on departmental officers and their reports.

Savage was deeply concerned at the financial struggle younger MPs with families were having to maintain their homes in the electorates and to subsist in deplorable conditions in Wellington during parliamentary sessions. Many boarded two or three to the cheapest room available and some, such as Dr McMillan, slept in a garage in order to make ends meet. Although some in the caucus wanted MPs' salaries raised substantially and immediately, Savage was reluctant to do so before the poverty in the wider community had been alleviated. He therefore proposed that the salaries of all ministers and MPs, including the Prime Minister, who received at £1,800 per annum over four times the salary of an ordinary MP, should be pooled in a trust account and divided equally among all members of the Labour caucus who wished to participate in his caucus

committee scheme.[27] When the scheme was finally established by a caucus vote of 52 to 3 in February 1936, it was decided that the basis for division would be £600 plus a special allowance of £250 for the Prime Minister, £600 for each minister, £550 for Lee, £520 for each of the MPs prepared to serve on committees, and the official honorarium of £411. 10s. for the two MPs who declined to participate. All income earned by MPs outside Parliament was to be declared and deducted from the amount any minister or MP received from the trust fund down to a minimum of £420, thus hopefully encouraging MPs to devote their full time and attention to their parliamentary and constituency responsibilities.

Some MPs became busily involved in ministerial, caucus and parliamentary select committees but others were not prepared to do the extra work or resented the restrictions on their secondary income. Lee—who had always disliked the pooling and equal division of salaries—Carr, O'Brien, McKeen and others continually suggested that the scheme be discontinued and that MPs be paid a more substantial salary of £750 per annum with £150 deducted for a new superannuation scheme for MPs. The increase was approved by cabinet in September 1937.[28]

As Prime Minister, Savage had a number of essential qualities. The government's main spokesman, he had 'an indefinable charm' and the power to endow every pronouncement with moral force while 'setting it out in words understood by the man and woman in the home.'[29] In the view of McCombs and others, Savage was a 'magnificent chairman' of caucus, except for a few atypical meetings late in his life, and the permanent head of the Prime Minister's Department, Carl Berendsen, believed that 'Savage ran the Cabinet well. . . . he had quite a difficult group to deal with and he controlled the business of the cabinet meetings as well as any Prime Minister with whom [Berendsen] was associated. . . . Savage was underestimated in relation to work of this type.'[30] Savage knew a sensible or humane idea when he heard it expressed and was prepared to defer to a logical argument from others, whom he frequently asked to summarise orally their detailed written reports and submissions. He listened carefully, brushed aside unessentials, summed up the arguments and his own opinion in a few well-chosen words, and quickly expressed a consensus in the words 'I take it our decision is so and so? Is that agreed?' Savage set the major policy guidelines in consultation with his closest colleagues and then, having delegated the tasks, supported his ministers and staff loyally and totally. His true humility was revealed by the fact that he was not worried by others around him becoming stronger and receiving credit for their actions. Savage was always prepared to admit that 'my action is built on other people's actions' and to help his ministers if they got into difficulty in the House or caucus, unlike his successor, Fraser, whom senior colleagues disliked for 'his sadistic instincts'.[31] Unlike Nash, who found it difficult to make decisions and became immersed in paper, Savage tended to clear his desk quickly and efficiently

during the day and rarely worked late into the night. A firm leader, almost immovable once his mind was made up, Savage, as one overseas politician noted, had 'far more astuteness and downright cunning . . . than he is generally credited with'.[32] He was determined that nothing would stand in the way of achieving his immediate goals of establishing the basis for social security and having it confirmed by the re-election of the Labour Government in 1938, and told his own Auckland West branch,

> I am not a child. I have lived a fairly long life and the present opportunity is the only one I have had or ever will have of getting anything fundamental done. . . . I ask you to remember that this opportunity comes only once in a lifetime and so I am not likely to lose it. . . . If we are defeated at the next election, is it reasonable to suppose that we would get back the following time? No. We have the ball at our feet now and we must go straight ahead.[33]

Forbes believed that 'Savage will have his hands full to keep his team from running over the top of him',[34] and Savage also feared that lack of discipline in Labour's ranks and unwise actions or comments by Labour's supporters could cost the government dear. On occasions, therefore, he did not hesitate to deal sharply with such people. Kelliher, for example, whom Savage had insisted on appointing to the Bank of New Zealand board, while visiting the Prime Minister's office mentioned to Savage that the Hotel Workers' Union was threatening industrial action unless there were twenty-five waitresses in the dining-room of the St George Hotel in Wellington, irrespective of the number of diners. Savage saw this as an attempt by the union's leader, Young, to make trouble for Kelliher in the interests of Kelliher's competitor and Young's patron, Ernest Davis. In Kelliher's presence Savage phoned Young, told him that the situation sounded ridiculous, that such actions were a discredit to the union movement, that compulsory unionism had not been introduced for such a purpose, and that the union should come to a reasonable settlement with Kelliher immediately and leave Davis and Kelliher to fight their own battles.[35]

Cabinet colleagues as well as trade union bosses sometimes were rebuked by Savage, who was quite prepared to 'lay down the law' when required. The party's president, Jim Roberts, was present one day when the ever-cautious Nash, at the insistence of the head of the Reserve Bank, Leslie Lefeaux, was putting forward numerous reasons for not doing something. In the end Savage intervened and told Nash curtly either to carry out the policy or resign as Minister of Finance.[36] On another occasion Semple, a cantankerous man, lost his temper in cabinet and used his extensive, imaginative and vitriolic command of language to abuse his colleagues. Savage, whom Berendsen saw as 'the complete master of his cabinet', listened in silence. When Semple had finished, Savage ordered him from the room and told him not to return to the cabinet table until he was ready to apologise and behave. The other side to Savage was shown

some time later, however, when Semple's health broke down in June 1937. Savage arranged for him to be relieved of his duties for eight weeks and sent Semple off to recuperate on a sea voyage and visit to Australia.[37]

Even the Governor General was apparently not immune when Savage was angered. Shortly after Labour came to power Viscount Galway informed Savage that he preferred to restrict his formal activities to functions of national importance and would not waste his time attending agricultural shows as his predecessor had. Savage reportedly declared that New Zealand had an agricultural economy and that 'this bloody Pom' was going to earn his pay. He instructed the secretary of internal affairs, Joe Heenan, to list all the major agricultural shows and see that 'Galway opens every goddam one of them!'[38] Certainly someone had to open the shows and the Prime Minister had neither the time nor the inclination to do so.

Immediately after the 1935 election Savage stated that 'there were more important things to be done than to chat over teacups' and that he and his government 'would not be found enjoying social occasions while people not privileged to take part were in dire distress'.[39] He also observed that Labour was 'not infallible, that we might make mistakes, but we would make other things too'.[40] A symbolic indication of Savage's determination to get down to work immediately with a minimum of fuss and bother was his request to the Governor General that the traditional top hats and morning coats should be dispensed with at the swearing in of cabinet.

Another indication was the opening item on the agenda at the first cabinet meeting on 6 December 1935: the payment of a Christmas bonus costing £100,000 to the unemployed with no distinctions to be made by race or sex.[41] A week later cabinet approved seven days annual holiday for relief workers and, on Savage's suggestion, made grants to all hospital boards for the purpose of providing Christmas bonuses for all recipients of charitable aid.[42] The government approved the reopening of the Dunedin and Wellington Teachers Training Colleges, raised student-teacher allowances in some cases by more than 350 per cent, and authorised an increase in the number of dental nurses to be trained during 1936.[43] Within a short time five-year-olds were readmitted to school, class sizes were reduced with the employment of more teachers, and entry to secondary school was widened. In other early moves, relief rates paid to men on public works were raised, the rents for tents were abolished, and Maoris were given the same relief rates and benefits as Europeans.[44]

Christmas and New Year were spent quietly with the French family in Auckland and then, after three hectic days of constituency engagements, with crowds gathering whenever his car stopped, Savage arrived in Wellington on 6 January 1936 and moved into the Prime Minister's residence in Molesworth Street. Alf and Elizabeth French accompanied him, the latter acting as his hostess on occasions. Savage threw himself

immediately into a seemingly endless round of appointments and meetings.

There were a host of problems and tasks demanding the attention of the new government and the Prime Minister, who told Eileen, 'I'm going for my life for the greater part of the 24 hours in each day. New Zealand's political transformation will probably help the people and shorten my life. . . . Our mission is to give some real security to those who are producing in abundance and are living in poverty.'[45] Savage was convinced that shorter working hours and higher wages and incomes were necessary if the people generally were going to share in the benefits of improved machinery and technology and demand was concurrently to be increased. That belief was to be reflected in much of the legislative programme prepared for the 1936 session of Parliament.

Cabinet quickly authorised the suspension of foreclosures under state mortgages; approved the setting up of a committee to work out and report on procedures to introduce guaranteed prices for the dairy industry and to negotiate an export marketing policy; and, on Savage's motion, approved in principle the establishment of a national library.[46]

At its meeting on 12 February 1936, cabinet decided that all ministers were to report back a week later on projected legislation to give effect to Labour's election policy. The law draughtsman was to advise Savage of the dates on which bills would be ready for consideration by caucus and submission to Parliament. Fourteen appointments were made in March to the Upper House, reinforcing Labour's two existing members of the Legislative Council and facilitating the passage of Labour legislation.

Samoa attracted the government's early attention, with repressive regulations being lifted and the lot of the Samoans improved generally. A treasury recommendation to charge the Samoan administration £1,000 for the upkeep of the Apia observatory was defeated in cabinet after Savage noted that 'Mr Berendsen strongly opposes Treasury's recommendation', an indication that Treasury's advice was not going to be accepted uncritically, even in minor matters.[47] Subsequently, Savage was to move and cabinet approve the granting of adult franchise to voters in Western Samoa in the election of a legislature.[48]

The Primary Products Marketing Act of 1936 fixed relatively high guaranteed prices for butter and cheese in return for a reorganisation of overseas marketing by the state. Until the rural economy recovered, a Mortgagors and Lessees Rehabilitation Act and a State Advances Corporation Act helped the heavily indebted farmers remain on the land.

In May Semple announced in Parliament a three-year programme of public works and a basic rate of £4 for a forty-hour week. Nash's Finance Act of 1936 restored all award rates and cuts in salaries and wages made during the Depression. The Factories Amendment Act, the Shops and Offices Amendment Act, and the Agricultural Workers Act of the same year limited working hours and established minimum wage scales. Combined with guaranteed prices to dairy farmers and extended and

Savage addressing a meeting of Maoris at Orakei. *NZLP*

Savage on the marae at Otaki with King Koroki. *NZLP*

Savage holding a Maori child at Tuahiwi Pa, Christchurch. *NZ Free Lance*

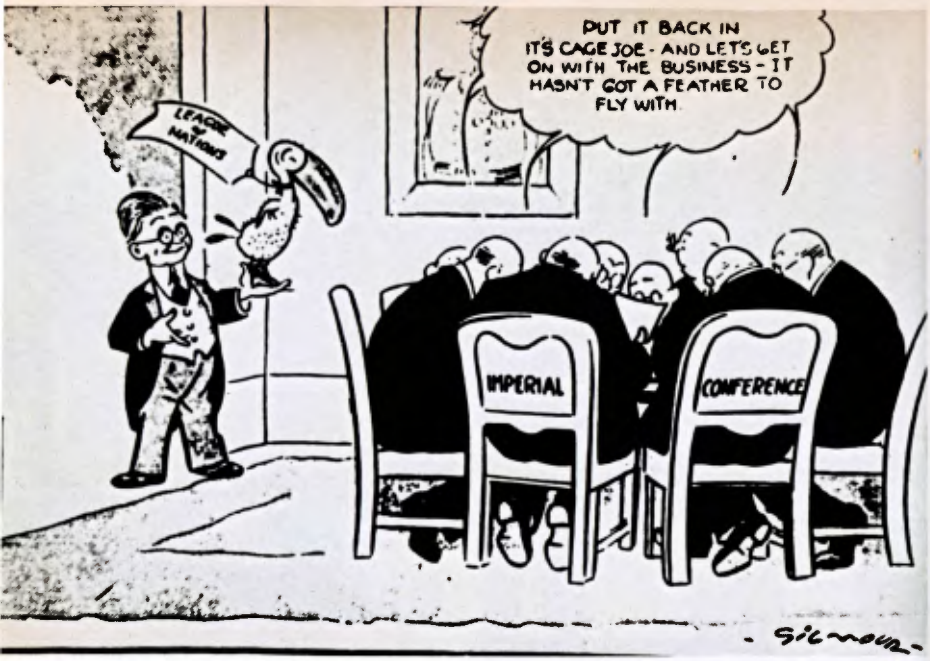
Aided by Semple and watched by Lee, Savage carries furniture into the first state house in Miramar. *Alexander Turnbull Library*

Savage kicks off in a rugby league game at Carlaw Park in Auckland, watched by Lee (far right). *Weekly News*

Jordan, Savage and Nash at Southampton, following Savage's arrival for the coronation. *NZ Herald*

Savage and Rt. Hon. W.G.A. Ormsby-Gore at Oxford, where Savage received on 23 June 1937 the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law. *NZLP*

King George VI and the premiers of the Dominions at the coronation. From left: Savage, Lyons (Australia), Baldwin (UK), the King, Mackenzie King (Canada) and Hertzog (South Africa). *Daily Sketch*



At the Imperial Conference Savage was very much the odd man out, as Gilmour's cartoon suggests. *NZ Truth*

In England Savage had his portrait painted. *Weekly News*

improved pensions, the increased total purchasing power of the community almost immediately stimulated the economy, creating more jobs and in turn further demand.

The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Amendment Act of 1936 introduced compulsory union membership and restored the power of the Arbitration Court, which was required, when making general wage orders, to take into account the needs of dependent wives and children. Large amounts of money continued to be voted for unemployment relief, while consideration was given to the longer-term development of new secondary industries to provide a more permanent solution to the problem.

Savage believed, together with others in the caucus and his friend Kelliher, with whom he met for discussions frequently during 1936, that a fundamental step in financial reform, if the Labour Party was to rule as well as govern, was 'the conversion of the Reserve Bank into a properly constituted State bank'. Such a bank, as Savage had long advocated, could be used to provide interest-free or low-cost money for public works, housing, and assistance to primary producers, with the proviso that at all times the value of money was kept as steady as possible.[49] It was this proviso that was in time to make Savage appear much more conservative than the more radical monetary reformers in the caucus.

At its meeting on 21 February 1936, caucus unanimously agreed to take over the Reserve Bank.[50] Differences, however, emerged between those who believed that control of the central bank alone gave the state the sole right and power to create and issue money and credit and to determine the value of the currency internationally through the exchange rate, and those who argued that the privately owned trading banks and other financial institutions also needed to be nationalised. The Reserve Bank Amendment Act of 1936, which gave the government complete control of the central bank also, did not necessarily mean that Labour's credit policies were going to be carried out by the Reserve Bank if the decision-making power remained in the hands of the cautious and orthodox Nash and his conservative adviser, Leslie Lefeaux, the governor of the Reserve Bank. Savage, on the one hand, had a genuine and longtime personal preference for more radical monetary reform, including firm control of all banks and the careful but widespread use of public credit, especially for public works, on the grounds that 'so long as private individuals control finance they control everything else'.[51] On the other hand, Savage was restricted by his loyalty to the industrious Nash—described by one senior public servant as the "incarnation of anything but the fearsome "Red Fed" "[52]—who always wanted to examine every problem carefully and at length and who believed that control of the Reserve Bank was sufficient and must be used in orthodox ways. Throughout 1936 and 1937 Savage, somewhat reluctantly, was forced to defend Nash again and again in caucus, finally in November 1937 using his casting vote against immediate nationalisation of the Bank of New

Zealand before the 1938 election.[53]

Savage's reluctance to nationalise the BNZ at the time, and also to introduce exchange control before the election, was based on tactics rather than principle. He probably was willing to act after the election but was concerned that action before the election could affect overseas prices and loans, public confidence, and the government's credibility. He was also suspicious of those who were arguing that credit creation could replace, and not just supplement, traditional taxation and borrowing, observing that, in his opinion, 'it does not matter whether we borrow money or issue money through our own banking institution, the same thing applies. The public credit is pledged and the productive power of the people must be the foundation of it in the long-run.'[54] As Coates, who seemed genuinely to believe that Labour's legislation was an implementation of 'the principles of communism' admitted, the opposition during 1936 was unable, because of its 'political incompetence', to resist effectively the 'countless far-reaching measures [which] have been passed through the House . . . without a suggestion of planned opposition.'[55] The opposition during 1936, he believed, 'has been very feeble. It has lacked leadership and direction.'[56]

Remarkably, however, out of the decimated, demoralised, divided, and leaderless opposition was to emerge within a relatively short time a reasonably united, well-organised, mass-based party, the New Zealand National Party, which was founded at a conference in May 1936. The new party, which emphasised the mutually reinforcing principles of economic private enterprise, individual freedom, personal independence, and intense loyalty to Britain, was built on a large, fund-raising membership base, which by 1938 had grown to an estimated 100 000 persons in 1000 branches.[57] The National Party was structured into branches, electorate committees, regional divisions, and a national conference, executive and office.[58] The right to select candidates was placed firmly in the hands of fully representative meetings of members in the electorate concerned, while party policy and the selection of the party leader were the responsibility of the party's MPs. Within a short time Forbes was replaced as leader by the rather stolid Adam Hamilton, a Southland farmer who had trained for the Presbyterian ministry.

Negotiations were conducted subsequently between the National Party and an organisation called the Auckland Freedom League, led by Ronald Algie, a former law professor at Auckland University College. The Freedom League, whose aim was 'to oust the Socialist Labour Party' but which at first diverted finance away from National, became 'an auxiliary in support of the National Party', especially in the propaganda area, and Algie in time became the National MP for Remuera.[59]

National claimed that Savage, with his expressed desire that people should 'eat, drink and be merry', was a 'gross materialist' unsuited to be 'the Prime Minister of a Christian country'.[60] Adam Hamilton com-

plained that the Prime Minister's optimism was misplaced and that he was merely 'painting the clouds with sunshine'.[61] Savage replied that even that would be 'better than following the Nationalist Party's practice of blackening the outlook with pitch'[62] or 'like the daughters of Babylon "sit by the river and weep" over the drift to socialism'.[63]

Certainly, National's tactics did much to contribute to a public perception of National as negative and Labour as positive. One National Party circular to its 1938 candidates advised,

> National Party speakers must remember that their first duty is to oppose the arguments, claims and promises of the present Socialist Government. Oppose! Oppose! Oppose! That is the essential duty of Nationalist speakers. Use every possible play of words, every fact you can advance to show that your political opponents are fools, political hypocrites, opportunists, seekers of power, despots, traitors to their own class, to their country, or their Empire. If a speaker can achieve this he has achieved the most essential thing. He has weaned his audience from placing confidence in, or retaining confidence in, his political opponent.[64]

Little wonder that even one Australian newspaper observed that the New Zealand National Party was 'lacking strength of leadership—Mr Hamilton has shown himself a plain man, with all a plain man's lack of fire and vision. . . . There is no general direction, no policy save crying nay'.[65]

The National Party's growth in membership and organisational strength was matched by Labour's. The Labour Party's branch membership surged upwards from 8300 in 229 branches in 1935 to 22 810 in 442 branches in 1937.[66] Savage's own Auckland West Branch went from fifty-eight to 250 and Lee's Grey Lynn branch from sixty-five to 509. Although Labour's 1936 conference reaffirmed its membership ban on those who belonged to the Communist Party or the Friends of the Soviet Union, members of the Social Credit Association continued to be welcome 'so long as the applicant is in favour of the Party's policies and methods.'[67]

The introduction of compulsory unionism and the affiliation of new unions to the Labour Party saw an even more dramatic increase in the number of affiliated members, from 24 814 in 184 unions in 1935 to 162 157 in 636 unions in 1937.[68] Labour's links with the unions had been further strengthened since 1934 by the formation in Savage's office of a joint committee of three representatives of the party and three from the Alliance of Labour[69] and by the large amount of money some unions paid to the Labour Party before and after the 1935 election. The waterside workers' union, for example, paid about £30,000 to the Labour Party during the period 1935–40.[70]

The union movement itself, however, was seriously divided. In 1936 the Alliance of Labour split into two factions. Fintan Patrick Walsh, the Seamen's Union boss, and his allies, including Fred Young of the Hotel Workers' Union, took control of the alliance. Jim Roberts, the longtime

leader of the waterside workers, together with the miners and the New Zealand Workers' Union, refused to accept the new leadership of the alliance and Roberts, who was about to begin his long term as president of the Labour Party, asked Savage not to recognise it either.[71] Savage responded with a strong public plea for the unity of Labour both politically and industrially and called for conferences to reunite the trade union movement.[72]

Savage also wanted to unite the two races in New Zealand because, as he had pointed out some years before, there was no future in discrimination or separatism. Maoris and Pakeha would rise or fall together. At Ngata's request, Savage gave himself the native affairs portfolio. He was assisted with the day-to-day oversight of the department by Langstone, the Minister of Lands, who had worked with Maoris in the King Country.

Although he had not taken the intense academic interest in Maori affairs that Holland and Fraser had, and although he admitted that he needed to be cautious and seek advice from those more experienced than himself in Maoritanga, Savage had throughout the 1920s expressed his belief that Maori land, because of the nature of its communal ownership and tenure, could well lend itself to some form of trust development. Many Maoris, however, undoubtedly saw Labour's early land policy as tantamount to further confiscation.[73] Savage had also argued that Maoris should have equal treatment with Pakehas in housing, employment opportunities, medical services, pensions, social benefits and schooling and that the Maori people should be encouraged to retain and cultivate their own culture and art. On numerous occasions Savage discussed them with Scrimgeour, who had worked as Methodist missioner among the Maoris at Waitangi and whose mother had known well many of the followers of Rua and Te Kooti. In those discussions Savage frequently related what he heard to his own experiences, including what he believed was Australia's shameful treatment of its Aborigines.[74]

Savage had regretted his predecessor Holland's apparent reluctance to support Eruera Tirikatene, who had promised to ally himself with Labour, in Southern Maori in 1932,[75] or to use the authority given to Holland by Labour's executive in 1931 to endorse all four candidates standing in the interests of the fast-growing Ratana Church established by a former Methodist faith-healer.[76] Undoubtedly, Holland recognised the animosity that existed between Ratana and the Maori King Movement, especially Princess Te Puea.[77] But Te Puea liked and admired Coates more than any other Pakeha politician, and Ngata also enjoyed her confidence. Ratana, with a much more egalitarian outlook and its support not among the aristocracy of Maoridom but, as Ratana freely admitted, among the unemployed and the itinerant poor, was certainly a much more logical ally for the Roupu Reipa or Labour Party, which was also known as the Roupu Rawakore (Party of the Poor) and Ngati Kai Mahi (Party of Food for the Workers). Inevitably, Tirikatene, the first Ratana elected

to Parliament in the Southern Maori by-election in 1932, had quickly and clearly associated himself with the Labour caucus and had voted with Labour on every division during his first session in the House.[78]

On 4 February 1936 Tahupotiki Wiremu Ratana met Savage in the Prime Minister's office. Ratana, in reference to the four Maori seats in Parliament, had predicted that one day his disciples would win all 'four quarters' and would help govern the land. He also was to remind Savage, on a number of occasions, of the prophecy of Tawhiao in 1869 that 'when the shoemakers, watchmakers, blacksmiths and carpenters rule this country then will the Maori people receive their salvation'.[79] At that first meeting Ratana placed before Savage a potato, a broken gold watch, a greenstone tiki, and a huia feather. Tirikatene, who had arranged the meeting, remembered how Savage looked and listened to the silent message before speaking:

> 'Brother', he said, 'they're speaking to me. I can just hear what they are saying. Yes, they are speaking, but I would prefer you to tell me.'
>
> The Mangai [Ratana] acknowledged the tribute to his mana and then explained the meaning of the symbols. The potato was the ordinary Maori needing his lands, for 'a potato cannot grow without soil'. The watch had belonged to his ancestor Ratana Ngahina and it was broken. So was the law relating to Maori land. As only machinery could repair the watch, only the law of the new government could correct the law of the old. The greenstone tiki represented the spirit and mana and the traditions of the Maori people. If Mr Savage would save them he would earn the right to wear the huia feather, the sign of the ariki, the paramount chief of Maoridom. He would become the father of his Maori people.[80]

What Ratana asked for, Savage promised and an electoral alliance was forged that was eventually to consolidate Labour's hold on the four Maori seats for many years.

The alliance between Labour and Ratana was sealed by various funds being made available almost immediately by the government to upgrade the Ratana Pa School, for token compensation to Taranaki Maoris for confiscated lands, and to help build a meeting-house at Waitara. Much more substantial finance was approved for Maori employment and land settlement schemes, and the area of Maori land under development by Savage's Native Affairs Department doubled from 104 928 acres in 1935 to 214 804 acres in 1938.[81]

Various conferences were called to discuss outstanding land grievances and to settle compensation for land confiscated in the past, and the Ministers of Health and Lands and the under-secretary for housing were instructed by cabinet to meet with Savage to consider the best means of using the large sums of money paid into compensation funds in the interests of the Maori.[82] In 1936 two major conferences were held.[83] The first, in September, dealt with education, health and economic problems facing the Maori and was dominated by paternalistic Pakeha 'experts'. The second, a three-day Maori Labour hui in October, was attended by

200–300 Maori representatives whom Savage asked for advice. He reiterated at the hui his promise of 'economic equality with racial individuality', an echo of his long-held general views on racial and cultural distinctiveness.

Ngata did not doubt Savage's sincerity but he believed that Labour's emphasis on two races within one people, economic equality, educational opportunity, and consultation through committees and conferences would make it more difficult to maintain the uniqueness and independence of the Maori people and was cutting across tribal divisions, traditional hierarchical leaderships, and the marae and runanga house methods of consultation.[84]

Not all Maori leaders who had welcomed the election of the Labour Government were enthusiastic about the Labour-Ratana alliance. Rangi Mawhete, Labour's most prominent and active Maori supporter over many years, and who initially had been partly responsible for bringing Ratana and Labour together, expressed some reservations about the alliance. At a meeting of the Labour Party's executive a few days after the election Mawhete and several other Labour Maori activists argued that the two new Ratana MPs had not joined the party before the election, that Ratana was trying to dominate the Maori race but would succeed only in dividing it, and that a formal agreement between Labour and Ratana would alienate the powerful King Movement and the Waikato tribes from the Labour Party.[85] The executive, however, approved the Ratana liaison and within a short time a Maori Organising Committee was formed. Despite his misgivings, Mawhete became its chairman, and the chief executive officer of the Ratana Movement, Paraire Paikea, became its paid secretary-organiser.[86]

Certainly, Mawhete was correct in predicting serious opposition from the King Movement. Despite Ratana subsequently pledging to support all four of Labour's Maori candidates, irrespective of whether or not they belonged to the Ratana Church, and despite Savage in July 1936 personally visiting Turangawaewae, subsequently in October 1937 receiving Te Puea at Parliament, providing timber and money to build a fleet of canoes for the Waikato, and promising the urgent settlement of land grievances, Te Puea disliked and distrusted Labour in general and Savage in particular because of his alliance with the despised Ratana.[87] Te Puea also objected to Labour's refusal to exempt King Koroki from having to declare his income and pay taxes and felt that Savage was insensitive to the regal position of Koroki, who had been 'treated like a commoner . . . by this taurekareka Kawanatanga (roguish Government).'[88]

On at least one other occasion, however, Savage showed considerable sensitivity to and sympathy for Maori views. Part of the proposed Orakei state housing site was Maori land and a Maori deputation waited on Savage in August 1936 to explain to him the history of the alienation of their land on the Auckland isthmus. The deputation asked that at least the

marae on the flat foreshore, where Savage had been ceremonially welcomed following his election as Prime Minister, should be retained by the tribe. Savage promised that justice would be done, although he admitted he was 'somewhat fogged' by the complexities of the situation.[89] He requested reports on the ownership question, especially the moral and legal rights of the Maori to tribal land at Orakei, but the reports were not completed and the issue was not resolved before he sailed for England early in 1937.

While Savage was away his colleagues, Langstone and Lee decided that the 120 Maoris living at Orakei, admittedly in squalor, were illegal squatters and had to be removed. According to Lee's biographer, Lee and Langstone wanted 'to obtain the Maori land for a park "for white children" '.[90] Representatives of the incensed Orakei Maoris met Savage on his return to New Zealand. In what was certainly a rebuke to his colleagues and a move not popular with many non-Maori residents of Auckland, who saw the Orakei Maori settlement as a disgrace to the district, Savage immediately reversed the decision made by Lee and Langstone. The Maoris remained at Orakei and 'what might well have become a major political crisis had it not been for Savage's good sense and sensitivity' was averted.[91]

Savage was very fortunate in the calibre of staff he inherited from the outgoing National Government. The permanent head of the Prime Minister's Department was Carl Berendsen, with whom Savage met almost daily.[92] A tough, conservative, intelligent and acerbic law graduate with a consuming interest in external affairs, who had joined the Prime Minister's Department in 1926 as Imperial Affairs Officer, Berendsen was to become one of New Zealand's outstanding civil servants and diplomats. Berendsen had a major influence on Savage's views on foreign policy and defence, reinforcing the very strong anti-appeasement views he found Savage already held, and, within months of Labour assuming office, was sent on an official visit to the United Kingdom and the League of Nations in Geneva to advise Jordan. Berendsen, whose own domestic political views were utterly opposed to Labour's, nevertheless became an almost unqualified admirer of Savage, with whom he established a relationship of trust, frankness and affection. In later years Berendsen recorded that of all the Prime Ministers with whom he had worked closely—Coates, Ward, Forbes, Savage, Fraser, Sidney Holland and Nash—Savage was, in his opinion, the best, the most considerate and easy to work for, a very competent administrator, a transparently good man, the nearest person to a true Christian that Berendsen ever met, and a man he 'admired, respected and loved'.[93] Fraser had great talents but in Berendsen's opinion Savage outshone him because he had a more considerate and sympathetic nature and was more efficient in the transaction of business. Savage had a 'quality of high courtesy that was more than politeness'. He was unpretentious, did not discriminate against those who thought

differently about politics, believed that the jobs of others were as important as his own, and was 'as astute as he was kindly'.

The chief private secretary to the Prime Minister and secretary to the cabinet from 1935 until 1943, when he succeeded Berendsen as permanent head, was Cecil Jeffery. A stately, dignified, reliable civil servant, Jeffery looked after the Prime Minister's appointments, and was assisted by one clerk and a typist. Savage also had on his staff, as secretary of native affairs, Sir Apirana Ngata's intimate friend Henare Balneavis, an experienced Maori administrator and scholar. The head of the Prime Minister's information section was Alister McIntosh, whose reputation was one day to rival and probably surpass Berendsen's in the creation of New Zealand's External Affairs Department. Much of the research and many of the policy drafts on foreign policy during the 1935–40 period were the work of McIntosh, who also kept files of newspaper clippings and articles, and regularly briefed Savage on domestic as well as international matters. McIntosh and the Solicitor General, Henry Cornish, were to become two of Savage's speechwriters on defence and foreign affairs matters. Savage would discuss the topic with them, provide an outline in note form, and finally revise the draft prepared for him. Berendsen, who like Savage saw foreign policy issues in simple terms of right and wrong, drafted in clear elegant prose telegrams to the United Kingdom Government and statements of principle for presentation to the League of Nations; McIntosh provided detailed research and briefings; Fraser and Nash had frequent conversations with the Prime Minister; Jordan corresponded regularly and at length with Savage; and together they evolved a clear, consistent and radical New Zealand stance on foreign policy.

The one member of his staff with whom Savage could not redevelop a close and harmonious working relationship was Lee, whose general attitude at that time and desperate desire to be a 'somebody' were indicated by his statement, 'By hook or by crook before this month ends I'll raise my status in Cabinet'.[94] Contrary to Lee's often-repeated claims in later years that Savage ignored him as under-secretary, Savage clearly at first tried to involve Lee in the business of government. Lee attended cabinet meetings with speaking, though not voting, rights. He was given the chairmanship of the Defence Committee and appointed to the important Finance Committee. He summarised material on housing provided by McIntosh and the Prime Minister's information section and eventually was given responsibility for initiating the state housing programme. After Lee threatened to resign as under-secretary unless the post was given legal status and he was given a home and staff in Wellington and all the financial privileges of a cabinet minister, Savage formalised the position and met Lee's demands in June 1936, although subsequently Lee ceased to be under-secretary to the Prime Minister and instead became responsible to Nash.[95] Lee also met with Savage frequently in the Prime Minister's

office throughout 1936 and 1937.[96] Indeed, in most months Lee saw Savage more times than any minister and, with Berendsen, was often the first person to have an appointment with Savage after Savage returned from a speaking tour or an absence from Wellington. In July 1937, for example, when Savage returned from the United Kingdom, the only appointment recorded in the Prime Minister's diary in the week he returned, apart from Berendsen who had been with him overseas, was with Lee.[97]

One task that Lee assisted Savage with was the establishment of commercial broadcasting. Before the 1935 election Savage had promised to conserve and extend not only the nationally owned and somewhat staid Y stations but also the private B stations, which were to be subsidised from licence fees and given commercial licences to charge for advertising. Savage was clearly not averse to the radio stations taking away advertising from the anti-Labour newspapers. Monopoly control of radio by vested interests, which might not respect the freedom of the air for 'any Church or political or cultural organisation', was to be opposed totally.[98]

Assured publicly and privately by Savage that his 1ZB would receive a commercial licence for Auckland and possibly for Wellington, Scrimgeour made several trips to Australia to arrange the necessary finance, personnel and equipment.[99] During the time he was in Australia, however, the financial resources of 1ZB declined dramatically because its friends and supporters 'have a foolish idea that the Labour Government are making immediate provision for our needs', and the secretary of 1ZB appealed to Scrimgeour to return immediately and try to borrow enough money to keep the station solvent. As soon as he reached New Zealand, Scrimgeour wrote to Savage requesting a meeting because,

> I am very embarrassed at this end. . . . I had to return just when I did because cash is out. As a matter of fact we will be faced with the necessity of closing down or borrowing money within one month. . . . I need your helpful advice as to what course I must adopt.[100]

Savage replied by return mail, inviting Scrim to meet him in Wellington.[101]

During the four months since the election, however, Savage's views on privately owned commercial broadcasting had been changing. Although Savage continued to enjoy a reasonably good relationship with journalists, and throughout his term as Prime Minister, except for the last few months of his life, he was to make himself available to them at 12.30 and 5.30 each day, his deep distrust of newspaper proprietors and editors continued. As the daily newspapers started to seek and obtain options over various B stations, Savage feared that the powerful new medium of communication could be used to oppose Labour in the same way as most newspapers had criticised the party over the years. That fear was compounded by the National Press Association ruling that no newspaper in New Zealand was

to accept advertising containing any reference to Broadcasting Service programmes and the situation in Auckland where 1ZB was ignored by the *Auckland Star* but 1ZM, 'virtually the voice of the Star', was mentioned in that paper.[102] Even Scrim's 1ZB could not be depended on, decided Savage, because, as he told Scrimgeour, 'while he had absolute reliance on my integrity "men die and goodness knows into whose hands might fall a very powerful weapon of publicity." '[103]

Savage met Scrimgeour in the Prime Minister's office fourteen times in a little over a month in June 1936 and finally resolved to make broadcasting a state monopoly. Scrimgeour, after helping Savage, Mason and Lee to draft a Broadcasting Amendment Bill, declined a suggestion that he become director-general of Broadcasting and instead decided to migrate with his family to Australia. In June 1936 Savage moved in cabinet that he be appointed Minister in Charge of Broadcasting and Nash moved that 1ZB be acquired by the government at a price not exceeding £4,000. The limit was removed by an amendment obviously reflecting Savage's influence and a proviso added that the Friendly Road programmes were to continue unhindered on the nationalised station. Although a price of £5,000 was finally agreed on, only half that was paid because Treasury insisted on paying solely for capital assets, not goodwill. 1ZB was officially opened as a state commercial station by Savage at the end of October.[104]

The post of director of the National Broadcasting Service was advertised in four countries and filled in August 1936 by Professor James Shelley, Dean of the Social Science Faculty and Professor of Education at Canterbury University College, though Savage would have preferred to have appointed the film-maker Rudall Hayward, with whom he was friendly.[105] Shelley, a rather formal and conservative Baptist, showed little interest in and even some antagonism towards commercial broadcasting, wanting to model the New Zealand system almost exclusively on the non-commercial British Broacasting Corporation. That was not what Savage had in mind but Shelley had the support of Sullivan, Fraser and Nash.

Ideally, in addition to the more formal and culturally oriented national stations, Savage wanted a service self-supporting from advertising and providing, for eighteen hours a day, seven days a week, light entertainment for men, women and children through serials, sports coverage, popular music, women's programmes and hospital sessions. In conjunction with the radio system he also envisaged a 'conservatorium of music', which would enable children to hear, become attracted to, and eventually learn music because,

> If some persons had their way . . . the great mass of the people would go from the cradle to the grave living hand-to-mouth existence, without music and without cultural advantages. They would be just tied up to something all their lives, perhaps a machine in a factory, or a mortgage on a farm. . . . We want the people to be able to enjoy a higher standard

> of life with access to everything that goes to elevate the mind—the soul, if you will.[106]

Savage believed that 'radio will soon be as necessary for the mind of a citizen as water is for the human body and will be laid on to every home in a similar way'.[107] He was 'longing for the time' New Zealand would be able to reach people overseas with its message of world peace through a shortwave broadcasting service and predicted that television was 'one of the coming things in New Zealand' but that, because it was 'fairly expensive and revolutionary developments were always on the cards', it might be better to wait a few years before introducing it.[108]

Suspicious of Shelley's attitude towards commercial broadcasting, Savage persuaded Scrimgeour in a series of eight meetings in September and October 1936 to accept a proposed post of controller of a separate National Commercial Broadcasting Service. Realising the extent of the likely opposition to Scrimgeour's appointment, even within his own cabinet, Savage sought a legal opinion from Cornish as to his precise powers under the Broadcasting Act. Cornish reported that although it was desirable to advertise such a post in accordance with the Public Service Act of 1912 and although the Public Service Commission would have to be requested in writing to make any appointment from outside the public service, Savage as minister did have the power to make an appointment.[109] Savage told caucus that he 'regarded Mr Scrimgeour as the best man to fill the position' and asked the Public Service Commission to confirm the appointment.[110] Until the formal post was established Scrimgeour was to be appointed temporary advertising manager for commercial stations at a very attractive salary of £500 per annum plus a commission of 7½ per cent on gross revenue. According to Scrimgeour, 'Savage . . . said that I had now a friend who would never let me down. Subsequent events very amply prove the truth of his statement.'[111]

The setting up of the independent National Commercial Broadcasting Service, whose letterhead and cable address were somewhat unfortunately shortened to 'COMRADIO', was not achieved without considerable opposition from the National Party and various newspapers, who attacked Scrimgeour as 'the chief propaganda artist of the Government', as 'the Commissar of Broadcasting', and as 'the Dr Goebbels of New Zealand'.[112] The conservative and hierarchical public service resented both the method of Scrimgeour's appointment and his unorthodox personality and methods of operating. Within cabinet and caucus there was also, as Savage admitted, hostility from 'the southern chaps' who 'do not fully understand the principle involved'.[113] Fraser, Nash and Sullivan certainly disliked and distrusted Scrimgeour and his close friendship with both Savage and Lee, and were to take every opportunity to undermine Scrimgeour. On one occasion Savage had to defend Scrimgeour against complaints from Nash and Semple that Scrim's broadcast about brothels on church land in Wellington would cost Labour votes. On another occasion, while Savage

was in Britain attending the coronation in 1937 and while some of his closest cabinet allies—Webb, Parry and Mason—were also absent, cabinet chaired by Fraser approved an inquiry by Treasury and the Crown Law Office into the business operations of 1ZB.[114] Lee believed that 'two-thirds of Cabinet would have butchered Scrim after the PM left for England', but on his return 'Savage's defence of Scrim . . . was spirited, wholehearted.'[115] The pressure on Scrimgeour was to continue until his eventual dismissal in 1943. Even Savage could not always adequately protect his controller of commercial broadcasting, as a very hostile, ill-informed and unfair inquisition of Scrimgeour by Treasury and the Public Service Commission in 1938 indicated.[116]

Scrimgeour realised the pressure that Savage had to withstand and wrote, following one parliamentary debate over his appointment, 'I feel that I owe you not only a great debt of gratitude for all that has happened during the past week but also a very sincere apology that I should have been the cause of so much nastiness from the other side of the House'.[117] Savage, however, replying to numerous people who wrote to him on the matter, suggested that most of those who attempted 'to discredit Mr Scrimgeour were really trying to embarrass the Government'.[118]

Savage continued to purchase all the existing B stations and to build new studios and offices for both the National and Commercial Broadcasting Services, including in June 1938 the purchase of land in Durham Lane, Auckland, for new premises for 1ZB. The success of the policy was indicated by the rise in radio receiving licences from 185 008 in 1935 to 317 523 in 1938 and a move from an operating loss by the commercial ZB stations of £11,954 during 1937 to a profit in excess of £10,500 in 1938.[119]

Savage's interest in commercial broadcasting was equalled by his wish to broadcast Parliament, and almost immediately he arranged for this through a new radio station at Titahi Bay.[120] Some outspoken sceptics within the Labour caucus, such as Morgan Williams, believed that no-one would listen to the debates.[121] The National Party, despite being promised 'reasonable and equitable facilities', condemned Savage's use of daily news services and occasional 'fireside chats', along the lines of those pioneered in the United States by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, as a blatant use of broadcasting propaganda.[122] The Prime Minister replied,

> Parliament under our democratic constitution is the mainspring of governmental power. . . . We cannot bring the people into Parliament, but through the medium of radio broadcasting we can bring Parliament to the people, so that at their own firesides they may listen to the most important discussions of questions vitally affecting their own lives.[123]

As Minister of Broadcasting, Savage left much of the detailed administration and technical matters to Jones, the Postmaster General. On policy matters, however, he showed a capacity, unlike some of his

colleagues such as Nash, of being able to make up his mind and was regarded by those who worked under him as

> an administrator's dream. He was pleasant, expected departmental submissions to be concise, and when the principles were explained he would frequently say, 'Well that sounds all right to me', and his 'Appd.M.J.S.' would follow. . . . Savage was a strong minister and he was master of broadcasting house. He had confidence in Shelley . . . and Scrimgeour . . . and he left them to administer their respective services without interference. He appeared to realise that broadcasting was a delicate function not measured in terms of other government departments and agencies, that public confidence rested on the integrity and independent judgement of management, and there were certain realms which politicians should not enter. Savage did not impinge in the domains of moral, religious or aesthetic values [unlike] Peter Fraser who succeeded him.[124]

In creating the commercial broadcasting system, Savage sometimes used Lee as his link with Scrimgeour. Savage also gave Lee the task of overseeing the government's state housing scheme. On his visit to Australia ten years before, Savage had been greatly impressed by the attractive, high-quality, state rental houses built by the South Australian State Government, although he continued to believe that 'It is better that people should own their own homes than they should rent them from the Government.'[125] The Labour Party conference in 1934 had also endorsed such a housing scheme for New Zealand, and when Labour became the government Savage announced, 'I think that we can have smiling homes in New Zealand; that we can use the public credit for the purpose of building homes worth living in.'[126] State loans were to be available for those who wished to build a house of their own and state houses were to be built for renting.

Although Nash was at first the minister officially in charge of housing and Savage was frequently called in to resolve serious problems, the day-to-day political oversight was in the hands of Lee, who changed to being under-secretary to the Minister of Finance, a post he held until December 1939.[127] Lee threw himself with enthusiasm and energy into the task of being the propagandist for the Housing Department. The managerial skills that made the scheme successful belonged to an ambitious and able public servant, Arthur Tyndall,[128] and a dynamic builder, James Fletcher, who, although an opponent of the Labour Party, had written the day after the election offering to assist the new government to fulfil its housing promises. Savage, who believed that the existing Public Works Department 'could not build a fowlhouse let alone a five million pound housing scheme',[129] on a number of occasions offered to buy out Fletcher, who then would have become director of a state housing construction department.[130] Fletcher declined each time, preferring to contract to build houses at a fixed profit, although because of escalating costs and shortages of skilled workers he lost money on the first houses he built. Indeed, faced with

a severe financial problem as a result of the losses he was sustaining, Fletcher in early 1938 decided to stop building state houses. According to Fletcher's biographer, Savage told him, 'You can't do that. . . . the people need houses, and we need you to construct them. Good houses, honestly built. We must have them.' Savage guaranteed Fletcher's bank overdraft and Fletcher continued building state houses.[131]

Savage also had to intervene personally in a vituperative dispute between Lee and the building trade unions, which by late 1936 were criticising the government's reliance on Fletcher and Lee's apparent unwillingness to allow individual builders or union co-operatives to tender for single houses. Savage soothed the unionists' injured feelings by pointing out that the government was giving workers shorter hours, higher wages, better conditions and decent homes, and that, while they were certainly not to blame for not having the experience to compete with Fletcher, Savage was not going to allow the unions to play with the millions of pounds being spent on housing.[132] The Prime Minister did suggest, however, that the workers should protest to Lee and Nash that they had not been given the chance to run the joinery factories servicing the building scheme and that they should form themeslves into co-operative societies and tender for groups of state houses in competition with Fletcher. Attempts were made unsuccessfully to follow Savage's advice and set up union construction co-operatives in Auckland, Wellington and Hamilton.[133]

During the latter half of 1936 land was purchased at Orakei, Roskill, Miramar, Lower Hutt, Christchurch and Dunedin.[134] Carpenters were recruited from Britain, although Savage, who wanted to train young unemployed New Zealanders under a short-term apprenticeship scheme, did not want 'to flood the labour market' in New Zealand and wrote to Jordan telling him so.[135] Lee, incidentally and revealingly, at the same time wrote to Jordan that, despite the official views of Savage and cabinet, 'My own private opinion is that by the middle of March there will be an absolute shortage in New Zealand of building craftsmen. . . . *I don't want you to discourage anyone who feels inclined to come our way.*'[136]

In December 1936 the first 375 housing contracts were advertised. New Zealand materials were to be used as far as possible and quality was to be a paramount consideration. Despite the reservations of Nash, Treasury and the Reserve Bank, Savage, encouraged by Lee, insisted that low-interest Reserve Bank credit should be used to finance state housing. £5 million at one per cent interest was made available initially to build houses with an average floor area of 1000 square feet at an average cost of £1,000.[137] The rent of a day's pay for a week's rent was set at a level sufficient eventually to cover the cost. In the next four years Labour built 6459 state houses and let contracts for a further 3894.[138]

The National Opposition was astonished by the use of Reserve Bank credit for housing, which disregarded traditional principles of budget

finance. Forbes admitted confidentially to Stewart,

> This places them [the Government] in a unique position, the houses after erection carry no interest on capital cost, and for instance a thousand pound house can be let for 5/- per week and be a financial success. . . . The millenium seems to have arrived and it makes one wonder why we had to struggle in the bog, when there was such an easy way out of our troubles. . . . Houses. . . . after being built with the highest paid workers in the world, at the lowest cost heard of, makes our policy of orthodox finance seem almost prehistoric.[139]

Forbes concluded that he and the opposition could not see any way of criticising the policy effectively because they could not see themselves what were the hidden disadvantages, if any.

The first of Labour's new houses, in Miramar, was handed over to its tenants on 18 September 1937. Savage's remarks were broadcast over 2ZB before he and other ministers helped carry furniture into the house.[140] In December a young union secretary, Tom Skinner, and his family became the first official tenants of a state house at Coates Avenue, Orakei, Savage again rolling up his sleeves and helping to carry furniture through the front door. Subsequently, Skinner was to discuss with Savage at the Auckland LRC and Labour Club the use of Reserve Bank credit and recalled that, 'while Joe spoke I began suddenly to grasp the Labour philosophy related to the creation of credit'. Skinner became a lifelong monetary reformer.[141]

Lee's attitude to Savage during late 1936 and early 1937 was rather ambivalent, but for a short time Lee certainly mellowed somewhat. For example, after Savage opened a new school in the Orakei settlement, stressing the importance of boys and girls being able 'to start life in the right environment' and paying a special public tribute to the work of Lee and Tyndall, Savage and Lee together watched a league game, visited a Grey Lynn Labour Party dance, and went to the Town Hall to see a wrestling match involving Savage's favourite wrestler and friend, Lofty Blomfield.[142] Lee recorded, in a strange mixture of sympathy and sarcasm, that Savage 'looked old and yellow . . . and I felt sorry for him. . . . sorry for this tired and sere political Atlas who had so nobly led the onslaught on depression.'[143]

Particularly while Nash was absent in England during the latter part of 1936 and the early part of 1937, Lee in his diary constantly, if grudgingly, complimented Savage.

> Savage sound on housing discussions. He wants a high-grade house.[144]
>
> Savage pleased me yesterday, showing a disposition in favour of low rentals. . . . Savage resisted Treasury and plumped for rents based on 2 per cent. The most revolutionary action yet taken. I do not think that Cabinet, apart from Langstone, Mason and the PM knew what it was doing. Walter will never back this tide. The PM wipes out past scores by going with me.[145]

> Savage is the complete socialist.[146]
> Joe well and so far amenable.[147]
> M. J. S. a good speech on his return [from Britain].[148]
> Convinced Joe wants to be friendly. . . . Joe delivered good speech to welcome Springboks.[149]

But Nash returned, Lee was not elevated to Minister of Housing as he desired, and the hostility between Savage and Lee reappeared. Lee's contemptuous attitude to Savage by mid-1937 was reflected in his comment, 'who the hell is the PM except one of the half-wits.'[150] The final straw for Lee was Savage's declaration in Parliament that Lee was only an under-secretary and, therefore, did not have ministerial status or responsibility and should not in his own right answer questions addressed to ministers.[151] All people, especially those as self-centred as Lee, need to have their talents and accomplishments appreciated and recognised. Lee felt that Savage unfairly withheld from him the respect and status that was his due.

Within three weeks of that perceived insult, an informal group of disgruntled Labour MPs started to become a caucus within the caucus, trying by concerted and repeated efforts to force changes in both the policy and personnel of cabinet. If necessary, the dissidents, who soon became a formidable force in numbers and ability, were prepared to select a new chairman to replace Savage and they commenced having meetings to decide how they should 'act to take control'.[152] At a meeting in Lee's office on 13 October 1937 the nucleus of the back-bench revolt was formed.[153] Present were Lee, O'Brien, Munro, Chapman, McMillan, Nordmeyer, Howard and Richards. McKeen, Carr and Barnard were to be informed of the meeting's decisions. Others who soon came to support, on occasions, the so-called 'left-wing' monetary reform faction included Williams, Lyon, Anderton, Herring, Denham, Hultquist, Osborne and, after 1938, C. F. Skinner and F. L. Frost. In cabinet they had the sympathetic ear of Langstone. The dissidents drew most of their support from a younger and more recently elected group of MPs with higher levels of formal education and without the strong group loyalty found among trade unionists. Their targets in cabinet included not only Savage but Fraser and Nash, whom the dissidents regarded as having an adversely conservative influence on the Prime Minister and on government policy.

Fraser was viewed by Lee as having 'great qualities, all negative'. Fraser was also 'no mean antagonist' but one with whom Lee could have 'a vicious brawl'.[154] Lee believed that 'Peter can't stand me' because Fraser feared him as a future rival for the leadership. Although Fraser kept telling Lee confidentially that he was trying to persuade Savage to give Lee a cabinet post, the blunt Langstone advised a sceptical Lee on several occasions that the devious Fraser was in fact influencing Savage in the opposite direction. Scrimgeour, who remained friends with both Savage and Lee, also warned Lee that Fraser and Nash wanted to perpetuate the breach

'Now Then'. Savage in a typical speaking pose during the 1938 election. *NZ Free Lance*

Savage between 1919 and 1940 frequently visited Auckland Hospital and it became his custom to spend time in the children's ward every Christmas morning. *Weekly News*

Savage, accompanied by Elizabeth and Aruba French, at the races chatting to the National MP Jack Massey. *Weekly News*

Accompanied by Paddy Webb (immediately behind him), Savage in the midst of an admiring crowd during a 1938 tour of the electorates. *Mrs A. Linklater*

Savage and Webb with tea and madeira cake at the Auckland Labour Club. Holland's photo is on the wall and the man offering the cake was Dickie Barter, a prominent Auckland Labour activist. *Mrs A. Linklater*

Possibly the most hurtful of all Minhinnick's anti-Savage cartoons was 'The Spirit of His Ancestors', published in July 1938. *Sir Gordon Minhinnick and NZ Herald*

between the Prime Minister and his under-secretary.[155] Fraser may well have been correct in seeing Lee as a potential rival, for though Lee was later to deny in public such ambition, he seems to have noted in his diary every personal thought or colleague's comment that suggested he should or could become leader of the party.[156]

Nash continued to irritate Lee, and sometimes Savage, with his economic conservatism, his unwillingness to delegate or move quickly, and his 'grasp of detail . . . but . . . little grasp of principle'.[157] Although Nash showed little consideration for those who worked with or for him, he was a very hard worker himself and, as a 'details man', admirably complemented Savage, who was more concerned with the big issues and the ultimate goals. In his diaries and contemporary letters, Lee noted that 'I thought we could drive Joe but Joe draped himself around reactionary Nash. It isn't the ivy, it is the building around which it is draped that is the obstacle.'[158] Lee started slashing at that ivy. Forty years later, in retrospect, Lee admitted that Savage, whose views on some matters were much closer to his own than those of the colder, more conservative, humourless Fraser and Nash, was not really the major target during the caucus rows, which were to become increasingly bitter as the years went by.[159] Lee and his caucus allies believed that Nash and Fraser could be persuaded by pressure to change their policies, or if necessary they could be pushed aside. The dissidents, however, could never get past Savage. 'Everything I fought Savage for was to get at Nash', said Lee. The caucus 'had to remove or attack Joe to get at Walter'.[160] If only Savage had chosen to listen not to Nash but to Lee, with whom he had once 'got on astonishingly well' in the 1920s, when 'every time Joe used to return from a trip he was enthusiastic about me, more so than about any Labour MP',[161] then, Lee believed, the history of the first Labour Government and of New Zealand itself might have been radically different. 'Without Nash,' Lee noted in his diary, 'we could do things. Savage would drift with the tide.'[162]

There is something contradictory and illogical in Lee's constantly reiterated complaint that Savage was weak, lacking in leadership ability and dominated by Nash, and in Lee's concurrent assertion that if he could have got past Savage, which he could not, to his real target, Nash, the Minister of Finance would have capitulated quickly and completely to pressure. Savage had shown throughout his life that he was not one simply 'to drift with the tide'. Nor was he a King Canute vainly opposing an irresistible incoming tide personified by Lee. Savage saw himself as a Prime Minister who believed in persuasion not coercion and who was loyally defending his cabinet colleagues against an apparently frustrated and excessively aggressive caucus trouble-maker. Lee's unremitting criticism of Nash was counter-productive. It went beyond the normal, healthy, dynamic conflict over policy inevitable and acceptable in any political party caucus. His repeated outbursts, dogmatic intolerance, and open

contempt for the leading members of the government made the party's secretary, Wilson, warn Lee after one caucus clash that if only he could control himself he would probably become a minister. Lee 'cursed and swore, "that bastard Savage".'[163] As a result the Prime Minister became more determined than ever that, despite his success in housing, Lee, the divisiveness he represented, his tactics of personalising every difference over policy, and his cruel tongue were not going to be allowed to disrupt cabinet as, more and more, they did caucus. Lee himself sensed that this was the underlying reason for his continued rejection.

> If I get into Cabinet I'll fight just as hard. And it is that Savage knows I will fight as hard inside which keeps me out. . . . In minutes we'd be caught up against the real antagonist. Where will Walter and Peter end? Will pressure force them on?[164]

That pressure was to increase to an unbearable intensity over the following three years and was to end only with the death of Savage and the expulsion of Lee.

XI
NATIONAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL SECURITY 1937–38

BEFORE 1935 SAVAGE had shown little interest in foreign policy apart from a few emotional and partisan observations such as 'Labour in every land is heart and soul with the Irish people. They were with them in the stormy days of 1916 and long before that. They will be with them until the end.'[1] It was not surprising, therefore, that as Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs, Savage's early speeches on foreign policy and defence were somewhat tentative. He freely admitted,

> I am not . . . a military expert, but the very opposite. One cannot be expert in everything. We are ready to listen to those who have knowledge of any subject. . . . Again may I say I am not an expert. . . . I am just one of a number that will carry the first responsibility.[2]

Savage not only recognised that he needed to consult colleagues, such as Fraser, Nash and Jordan, and official advisers, such as Berendsen and McIntosh, but he also realised that without its own developed foreign affairs department New Zealand was, for the most part, dependent for information on the British. The New Zealand Government's role in international affairs, therefore, would of necessity be largely a reaction in general terms by a leadership team, rather than by one man, to events and policies outside the country's control.

However, that did not mean that Savage lacked fixed principles and attitudes that influenced the ways he personally perceived and reacted to international events. It soon became clear that Savage believed that, even if New Zealand were committed to follow Britain, the New Zealand Government had the right to be informed, consulted, and to have the views it expressed considered seriously by the British. If in the future, Savage observed in 1935, world peace proved impossible to maintain, 'Our

youth should not be sacrificed for unknown causes and unknown policies and without reference to the representatives of the people.'[3] The security of New Zealand was essential if the society that Savage hoped his government would create was to be protected. Social security and national security could not be separated. Freedom from want and freedom from invasion were equally important.

Savage had a deep horror of violence and war and realised that modern technology would increase the capacity for slaughter and make traditional military thinking obsolete. 'The battles of the future', he predicted on becoming Prime Minister, 'would be fought from the chemist shop and . . . in the air.'[4] Pacifism and unilateral disarmament, however, were no answer. Only through New Zealand's unequivocal support for the ideal of collective security through the League of Nations could a practical stand be taken against ruthless, brutal and immoral aggressors. In 1935, advocating immediate and strict economic sanctions against Italy in retaliation for its invasion of Abyssinia, Savage stated,

> Labour's passion for peace makes it necessary for us to support the collective action of the League of Nations towards enforcing world peace; and it seems to me that when the nations of the earth set themselves to the problems of stopping supplies to the aggressor in each case, we will be nearer to the principles advocated by the Prince of Peace than we are today.[5]

New Zealand's own defence contribution required serious attention. In July 1936 a caucus committee on defence was established with Savage as nominal chairman and Lee as convenor. The other members of the committee were Jones, Fraser, Nash, Sullivan and Barnard.[6] During the following year Labour not only prepared for the eventuality of mobilising a 1st Echelon but also planned the establishment of a Royal New Zealand Air Force.[7] The New Zealand Government offered to survey landing grounds for an air reconnaissance network in the south-west Pacific and to station New Zealand garrisons in Fiji and Tonga,[8] and Savage took with him to the 1937 Imperial Conference in London detailed background papers on the strategic importance of forward defence positions in the Pacific Islands.[9] In the 1935–38 period New Zealand's spending on defence trebled.[10]

The international situation in 1936 was very depressing. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, followed by Italy's aggression against Abyssinia in 1934, followed by the revolt of fascist army officers against the left-wing government of Spain in July 1936, had all put a tremendous strain on the League of Nations. Even where, as in Abyssinia, the aggressor appeared to have been victorious, Savage argued that it should not be rewarded by de facto recognition and that sanctions should be maintained. When the New Zealand High Commissioner in London, the former Reform minister Sir James Parr, showed a reluctance to challenge Britain or breach imperial unity over sanctions, Savage brusquely ordered him

to carry out Labour's policy.[11] Parr was soon replaced by Jordan, who shared Savage's outlook and ideals and claimed that he knew exactly what Savage wanted said on foreign affairs. As a result of 'the many years that we worked together, our many rides on the train, our walks home at night or to the House in the morning', Jordan assured Savage that in London and in Geneva, whether talking with the British Government or in the League of Nations, 'we have your policy well in mind.'[12] That policy was soon to be expressed in person by Savage to the British and to the heads of the other dominions.

In February 1937 Savage spent a fortnight touring and holding meetings in the South Island: at Invercargill, Oamaru, Timaru, Dunedin, Ashburton and Christchurch. Frequently starting at 7 o'clock in the morning and finishing after midnight, he made numerous addresses, visited factories, and attended receptions and socials. After spending a Sunday relaxing at a shooting picnic on a homestead near Christchurch, he returned to the North Island and toured it, starting at Auckland and then journeying south via Rotorua and Palmerston North to Wellington. He paid particular attention to Maori land development schemes and was welcomed onto the maraes at Ngapuna, Maketu, Rotorua, Horohoro and Tikitere.[13]

The Labour Party's 1937 annual conference opened on 29 March 1937. Savage was not there. After visiting old friends in Auckland and after agreeing to have a portrait of himself painted in London, paid for by Ernest Davis for presentation to the Auckland Labour Club, he had sailed on the *Arawa* for England via Panama on Easter Saturday, 27 March, to attend the coronation of King George VI and the Imperial Conference. Savage was to be away from New Zealand for four months and he confided to his niece Eileen, in a letter he wrote only seven days out at sea, that, 'Frankly my heart is in N.Z. and I shall be glad to again find my feet on N.Z. soil'.[14]

Savage was reluctant to travel to Britain for the coronation and Imperial Conference and had to be persuaded to attend by Nash and Berendsen.[15] The Prime Minister would certainly have preferred to remain in New Zealand overseeing the preparation and passage of domestic legislation to implement Labour's policy. He also probably had some reservations about the coronation of George VI because Savage had firmly opposed the abdication of King Edward VIII. Initially, Savage had little knowledge of who Mrs Simpson was or why she was so unsuitable a consort for the King. However, after being briefed on the situation the New Zealand Prime Minister, during the abdication crisis of November-December 1936, became the sole dominion leader prepared to argue that the King should not abdicate simply because he wanted to marry a divorced American. Even after Nash, who was in touch and sympathetic with the firm views of the British 'establishment', reported from London that abdication was inevitable, Savage still cabled his government's 'dismay and deepest regret'

and asked Edward to reconsider.[16]

The first three days at sea the weather was cold and overcast. On Tuesday 30 March, just as the sun emerged for the first time, the *Arawa*'s engines broke down. After 'lolling on the ocean' for a time, the ship continued on its way across the Pacific at reduced speed. Because of the ship's slow progress there was some suggestion that 'Mr Savage and party were going to be put on the *Rangitata*',[17] but Savage completed the journey on the *Arawa*. An observant fellow-passenger, a nurse, wrote in her diary, 'Mr Savage mooches round the decks—looks a shy man'.[18] Savage may well have been feeling sea-sick, or perhaps the effects of the tropical heat, because she also recorded in her diary that 'Mr Savage still walks round with a handkerchief in his hand.'[19] He whiled away part of the time talking with other members of his party, which included Berendsen and his wife; reading; watching motion pictures, including several New Zealand-made films; attending socials; and playing deck quoits in a slow, deliberate way, 'the same way as he speaks'.[20] At Panama, where the weather was beautifully fine, the British Consul boarded the ship and spent eight hours with Savage and his party in the Captain's cabin. Finally, after a cold, wet, stormy Atlantic crossing, the *Arawa* arrived at Southampton in thick fog on Tuesday 4 May.

Jordan and Nash, who in Savage's words had gone on ahead to Britain 'to bounce the ball', the Australian rules football way of starting a game, met the Prime Minister at Southampton. They took Savage to the Savoy Hotel, where he was to stay with the prime ministers of the other dominions as guests of the British Government. Nash arranged for Savage to be outfitted at Moss Brothers with clothes appropriate for the coronation. Two days later Savage had an audience with the new King and then spent his first weekend in England at Chequers, the country house of the British Prime Minister. The early days in Britain were spent in a constant round of official and sometimes spectacular engagements: Monday 10 May, coronation rehearsal in Westminster Abbey; Tuesday, lunch at Buckingham Palace; Wednesday, coronation of King George VI; Thursday, meeting with the British Labour leader, Clement Attlee, and state banquet at the palace; Friday, opening of the Imperial Conference, dinner with the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, and ball at the palace.[21]

The pomp and ceremony left Savage singularly unimpressed and he continued to be frustrated by his absence from New Zealand. He wrote to Eileen,

> I'm just longing to get back home in order to get on with my real job. The amount of artificial humbug that one meets with here is astounding. . . . If you could have seen me in Westminster Abbey decked out in the uniform of a Privy Councillor you would have wondered if I was the person who in 1893 carried his swag through the Riverina.[22]

So reticent indeed was Savage at the coronation that on his return to New Zealand he was criticised in Parliament by W. J. Broadfoot, the National MP for Waitomo, for not showing himself more in the coronation procession. People lining the streets had been unable to see him. Savage replied that, 'It was the King's procession; it was not mine. I was not out to do a little electioneering like some people.'[23]

The weeks after the coronation saw Savage attending a bewildering range of meetings and functions including a reception at the Duchess of Sutherland's, part of the 'booze, women and invitations to stately homes' treatment Savage said the British accorded state visitors. He was greatly offended and annoyed when, after he declined the offer of the company of a high-class female prostitute, British officials misinterpreted his lack of interest and his bachelor status and offered to satisfy any homosexual needs.[24] On a less erotic and esoteric level, Savage's diary recorded a morning with the veteran union leader Ben Tillett; the review of the fleet at Spithead; a broadcast on the BBC; a cricket match between the New Zealand touring team and the Maori Club; the award of an honorary Doctorate of Civil Law from Oxford; and the freedom of the City of London. He was sworn in as a Privy Councillor at Buckingham Palace, recalling later with wry embarrassment that dressed 'in knee breeches and all . . . I looked a proper Charlie'.[25] He dined with the King, with the renegade former Labour Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, with the Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion, again with Attlee, with Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, and with Neville Chamberlain, who succeeded Baldwin as Britain's leader during the Imperial Conference. Although he was unimpressed by, and indeed appeared to resent, the obligatory receptions and ceremonies, whenever possible dining alone in his suite at the Savoy, Savage reciprocated the hospitality shown to him by hosting at the Savoy a reception for 600 people. In reply to criticism of the cost from opponents in New Zealand, Savage revealed that he had paid for it out of his own salary and Prime Minister's entertainment allowance.[26] On his return to New Zealand he submitted a detailed account of expenditure, which came to about half that usually incurred by a minister travelling overseas, and repaid to Treasury about £1200 in unspent allowances to which he was entitled. It was apparently the first time such a refund had been received.[27]

By the time the Imperial Conference commenced on 14 May, at least one major London newspaper, the *Daily Express*, was suggesting that the 'outstanding figure' at the conference would be Savage.[28] In New Zealand even the *Dominion*, in an editorial, admitted that 'Mr Savage obviously made a good impression', especially in 'leavening what is described as a real "fighting" interview with flashes of wit which drew bursts of laughter from his questioners'.[29]

The conference operated on the basis of discussion and consensual agreement, not formal debate and majority resolutions, but soon, however,

Savage and the other prime ministers at the conference were at odds. South Africa was the first to be offended when Savage strongly opposed any return to the gold standard. Then Britain requested endorsement of its foreign policy of appeasement. Savage, who pointed out that 'information is one thing; consultation is totally different', refused to agree.[30] Despite protests from others at the conference, he then launched a stinging attack, written probably with the help of Berendsen and Nash, against Britain for weakening the League of Nations, damaging the concept of collective security, and failing adequately to consult the dominions on matters pertaining to foreign policy and defence.[31] He claimed, 'Britain has taken the lead in weakening the League on every occasion upon which it has been weakened' and specified British actions in regard to Japan's invasion of Manchuria, which had driven the United States into isolationism, Italy's conquest of Abyssinia, and the rearming of Hitler's Germany. Britain's policy of non-intervention, he argued, operated entirely in favour of the aggressors.[32] New Zealand was a small country, said Savage, whose vulnerability and distance from Britain made collective security and world peace absolute necessities. He concluded that

> Britain could not at one and the same time hope to abandon her obligations at Geneva and expect the dominions to support her automatically in a future war which might break out as a result of a policy with the objects of which the dominions most emphatically disagreed. New Zealand could not maintain her assurance of aid in time of war if Britain on her part refused to pursue a policy based strictly on the principles of the League and of collective security.[33]

The world economic situation then received Savage's attention. He dismissed abruptly a report dealing with economic aspects of foreign policy, prepared as background information by British experts for the conference. In his opinion, said Savage, 'the report was bunkum from end to end'.[34] Adopting an almost Marxist perspective, that political, social and foreign policy relationships reflect and are indeed largely determined by economic factors, Savage suggested, using Marx's terminology, that it was necessary 'to put the economic position right before we could complete the superstructure of peace'.[35] Only by increasing the living standards and purchasing power of the world's masses could economic activity and production be increased domestically and internationally. Only by replacing want, injustice and envy could people live together in good will and peace. Savage proposed, therefore, the calling of a world conference of nations, 'before war begins, rather than after it', to try to establish peace on a permanent basis by reforming the world economy.[36]

There was little support for Savage's views and suggestions from the other leaders at the Imperial Conference. Not only the British but the Australians and Canadians attacked him on a number of occasions, and back in New Zealand National MPs strongly criticised Savage's speech and his lack of comments 'about loyalty to the throne and to the

Empire'.[37] Savage recognised that New Zealand was alone among the dominions in totally opposing appeasement and commented that, 'if it had come to taking a vote, as far as my voice was concerned—well, John the Baptist wouldn't have been in it'.[38]

New Zealand's Prime Minister further embarrassed his British hosts by expressing anxiety about the security of the Pacific and particularly Britain's intentions and ability in regard to the defence of Australia and New Zealand and the viability of the Singapore naval base. Although he was resigned to the fact that in the event of war the 'Commonwealth must stand or fall together' and that New Zealand, because of its size, 'must sink or swim with the United Kingdom', Savage stated that that very commitment necessitated and justified New Zealand's questioning Britain's foreign and defence policies. He doubted specifically whether, if Britain became engaged in a European war, the British fleet would or could be sent to Singapore in the event of a Japanese attack in the Pacific.[39] If the British were not able to maintain an adequate fleet in the Far East in peacetime, then where were the ships going to come from in time of war? Reluctantly, Savage accepted British assurances that New Zealand would not be threatened by the Japanese fleet as long as Singapore remained in British hands.

At subsequent special meetings between British, Australian and New Zealand representatives to the Imperial Conference, Savage, the only Prime Minister to attend those special meetings, explored further New Zealand's defence position. He suggested the possibility of New Zealand shifting from sea to air defence and replacing its cruisers *Leander* and *Achilles*, acquired shortly after Labour took office in 1935, with two medium bomber squadrons. The British pressed Savage for an assurance that New Zealand would retain the cruisers but Savage declined to give any firm commitment on the grounds that such a decision would have to be made in Wellington not in London.[40] Eventually, in early 1938, New Zealand decided to maintain both cruisers and also develop the bomber squadrons.

Savage accompanied Nash to other meetings concerned with New Zealand's trade relations with the United Kingdom and pointed out bluntly that New Zealanders had to make a living. If the British could not expand their market for New Zealand's exports then New Zealand would have to 'embark upon secondary industries or find other markets for her primary goods'.[41]

On at least one occasion during the Imperial Conference Savage recalled that 'I got stuck into them with some good Australian expletives'. Subsequently, at a Buckingham Palace garden party, the formidable Lady Nancy Astor expressed her negative opinion of Savage and his conduct and comments at the conference to Mrs Knox Gilmour, the daughter of Richard John Seddon, and to Nash. Savage was informed. He telephoned the British Prime Minister and demanded an explanation of how Lady Astor knew what had been said at the conference. He intended

calling a press conference to set the record straight so that no garbled story got back to New Zealand. Baldwin was horrified at the thought of Savage making a public statement and asked for time to investigate. Within an hour Baldwin phoned to say that Lady Astor was at 10 Downing Street and wanted to clear up 'this most unfortunate affair'. Savage decided to let the matter drop.[42]

After the conference concluded, the British Labour Party entertained Savage and other members of the New Zealand delegation at a formal dinner. Hugh Dalton, one of the British Labour leaders, recorded in his diary that 'Savage made a most admirable speech. He spoke in clear, simple, forcible English. Some passages might have been by Abraham Lincoln. . . . He thinks the Conference has achieved nothing. . . . He showed great self-confidence'.[43] Savage talked about Labour's slow rise to power in New Zealand, about the broadcasting of Parliament, about the need to maintain and expand trade between New Zealand and Britain, and about New Zealand's inability to defend itself against an aggressor. He concluded with the observation that 'the British Commonwealth must stand together and they must all be loyal to Collective Security through the League'.[44]

Savage arrived back in New Zealand on 28 July 1937. In addition to meetings of cabinet and caucus and the day-to-day duties of being Prime Minister, he visited Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin to 'show the flag' before Parliament reopened in September. Foreign affairs, however, were not forgotten now that he was no longer in London.

A few weeks after Savage's return to New Zealand the British decided to recognise the Italian conquest of Abyssinia in order, so they said, to get Italy back into the League of Nations. Savage immediately cabled the British Government opposing the recognition and disassociating New Zealand from Britain's message to the Italian Government.[45]

In September 1937 Jordan returned to Geneva from London and reported to Savage that 'knowing your mind as well as my own feeling, I hopped in early at a meeting of the Council and expressed an opinion which seemed to cause a little concern. . . . I . . . am candidly of the belief that everything I said would have been said by you had you been here'.[46] Although Britain's Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, had warned the New Zealand representative that Britain did 'not want to lose the friendship of Franco' because of the large amount of British capital invested in Spain, and despite the total support for Franco from the Austrians, the Hungarians, and the Irish leader Eamon de Valera, Jordan went on to criticise Britain's 'farce of non-intervention' in the Spanish Civil War, a stance which only served to prevent the Spanish Government receiving support.[47] Unfortunately, Jordan told Savage, among the representatives of Britain and the other dominions,

> there would not be any great regret if the left Government of Spain were defeated. . . . but you and I are not so much interested in the policy of

the Government as in the fact that it was elected, and, further, that it is a Member State of the League of Nations.[48]

The New Zealand Government, however, was able to do little to help the Spanish Government except raise a lonely voice of protest and make finance available, apparently at Savage's suggestion, 'for feeding all Spanish children who are in need.'[47]

Jordan also argued on Savage's behalf that 'an adequate home should be provided for the Jews in Palestine', though the fact that the area was already settled by Arabs whose tenure had been guaranteed by the British during World War I, and that Egypt, Iraq and the Soviet Union were negative to the proposal, made the creation of a state of Israel very difficult.[50]

Of more immediate concern to New Zealand was the Japanese invasion of China in July 1937. Jordan reported to Savage that 'Britain and Australia had agreed that definite charges should not be laid against Japan' because 'if the League takes a definite stand . . . it may mean that there will be widows in Glasgow as well as in China.'[51] Again New Zealand found itself isolated from the rest of the Empire when Jordan bitterly attacked Britain and the rest of the dominions for 'refusing to stop a mad gunman but merely following with bandages patching up some of the damage he was doing.'[52] New Zealand's stance led to the Soviet Union's Foreign Minister, Maxim Litvinov, moving successfully that New Zealand be added to a committee of the league established to consider China's complaints and Japan's actions.

More serious still, in New Zealand's view, was Britain's apparently conciliatory attitude to Germany's Chancellor, Adolf Hitler. In March 1938 the new British Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, told the Dominion High Commissioners that central Europe was obviously Hitler's concern and that 'whatever Hitler had said or promised in private conversations with representatives of the United Kingdom he had respected and fulfilled.'[53] Britain had, therefore, told the French that if they went to the assistance of Czechoslovakia Britain could give no assurances to France. Jordan, on New Zealand's behalf, objected, but the South African High Commissioner strongly supported the British position.[54]

Savage within three or four weeks publicly stated that he and his government 'have disagreed with certain phases of British foreign policy' including the appeasement of Hitler, a stance that provoked reaction from some of New Zealand's newspaper editors, who called Savage 'a fly in the Empire ointment' and regretted 'this embarrassing and deplorable display of Empire disunity.'[55] Savage was unrepentant and in May 1938 New Zealand joined the Soviet Union in forming a minority of two in the league's council against recognising the Italian conquest of Abyssinia.[56] The leader of the National Party, Adam Hamilton, subsequently and unsuccessfully moved in the House of Representatives a no-confidence motion against the Savage ministry on the grounds 'that the attitude of

the Government with regard to foreign affairs is a direct threat to the solidarity of the Empire' and that Jordan 'is apparently preferring to keep company more with the Russian delegates than with British delegates.'[57]

Savage developed not only an interest in foreign policy but also a renewed awareness of religion in the last few years of his life. On the trip back from England to New Zealand Savage had spent a great deal of time studying a little, red-bound New Testament that he had been given when he was sworn in as a Privy Councillor. He discovered many similarities between his own philosophy of life and Christ's teaching. Savage's childhood faith was rekindled. A year later, he produced the book at a meeting in Invercargill attended by over 3000 people and claimed that he and his government 'were following in the footsteps of the Great Teacher of 2,000 years ago'.[58]

During the last two-and-a-half years of his life, Savage, the onetime militant rationalist, although never seeing himself as God's gift to New Zealand politics as Nash probably regarded himself, showed much more interest in religion in general and Christianity in particular. Again and again, in speeches inside and outside Parliament, he tried to explain his own life's work and the actions of the Labour Government in Christian terms. He told the House, for example, that Christ 'dealt with the poor, that all of His philosophy was directed towards the poor; and . . . if I had to go down to the grave following in His steps, I would not have wasted my life.'[59] Savage believed that 'faith without works was useless' and that

> unless we can express our Christianity in service the sooner we knock off talking about it the better. There is no way of dealing with poverty except by getting to the people who are poorly paid, poorly housed, and poorly fed, who cannot reach the main facilities for education and medical services. . . . the people's well-being is the highest law, and so far as this Government is concerned we know no other.[60]

Outside Parliament Savage continued to think through aloud, in lengthy passages in his speeches, the relationship he perceived between religion and politics. He told 1300 people at Ashburton, for example, that because of

> his reading of the Scriptures. . . . he understood the principles of some of [Christ's] wonderful teaching. . . . There was a greater need now for a spiritual revival than ever before. Nations were arming and peace treaties were as if they had never existed.[61]

Although Savage returned slowly to the church in which he had been raised as a child and only received the sacraments again during the last seven months of his life, his critics such as Lee and the bigoted Morgan Williams accused him from 1935 of favouring fellow Catholics. In fact, Savage continued to abhor religious discrimination and sectarian conflict. The observant Presbyterian minister Nordmeyer believed that, although

the Catholic bishops O'Shea and Liston had a minimal influence on Savage, it was certainly no greater than that exercised by the liberal Methodist Scrimgeour.[62] Savage was quite prepared to do all he could do secure a site for a new Anglican cathedral in Wellington[63] and to show his 'profound understanding of the problems affecting the Jewish people', supporting both the entry to New Zealand of refugees from Nazi Germany and the concept of a Jewish national home in Palestine.[64] His closest friends and political associates came from all religious backgrounds: the Anglican French family, the Methodist minister Scrimgeour, the onetime Presbyterian Fraser, the Anglican Nash, the Methodist lay preacher Jordan, the Jewish brewer Davis, the lapsed Catholics Webb and Fagan. Nor did Savage allow his close friendships to be influenced by his friends' sexual habits. Some, such as Liston, were celibate like Savage himself; others, such as Alf French and Nash, were strictly monogamous; others, such as Webb, Fagan and Davis, had sexually promiscuous reputations. To Savage, the family was sacred and he disapproved of husbands having extra-marital affairs. He was less concerned about the sex-lives of single people without family responsibilities, and when challenged once about his friend Webb's amorous affairs, replied, 'Have your ever tried to lassoo a kangaroo?' Savage's own religious and moral outlook was, therefore, more embracing than that of a single denomination and he accepted his friends for what they were, not what he thought they should be. As he said,

> . . . only one religion that I understand and follow. I have taken some notice of the philosophy of religion and giving lip service does not do me. My efforts are aimed at establishing the Kingdom of God upon Earth. What does it profit a man when his faith is in words.[65]

Although Savage never appeared to believe that he was God, as Lee later suggested,[66] Savage may well have identified, at least subconsciously, with some of the great Christians of history. He told a Methodist rally, for example, that John Wesley had 'tried to express the value of his own spiritual experience in service for others' and drew attention to 'the material as well as the spiritual transformation which John Wesley worked . . . among the poor, the sick and needy, and dispirited people.'[67] Savage may have gone further and identified not only with Wesley's work but even with Christ's conscious decision to lay down his life for others.

At a meeting in Levin in June 1938, Savage admitted that, as Prime Minister,

> he was not infallible and made mistakes, but his only object was to serve, and he understood the meaning of the word service. . . . The greatest man that had ever lived had laid down his life in the service of those who were round him at that time. . . . if he [Savage] was content to follow in those steps, he thought he should be supported by everyone that claimed the name of Christian. The Government would play its part in assisting to establish the Kingdom of God upon earth, and he was

> doing his utmost to make it possible for the children to live the lives they had been ordained to live.[68]

Only a few of his closest confidants knew that in the latter part of 1938 Savage was seriously, possibly terminally, ill but had chosen to delay an operation that might have saved him rather than risk a change of leadership before the social security scheme was in place and its future sealed by the re-election of the Labour Government. For some time Savage had shown that he was conscious of the fact that he was not a young man in comments such as, 'If I go down to the grave trying to help the people who have worked with me for the common good I will have nothing to regret'.[69] By the beginning of 1938 the often repeated phrase 'down to the grave' had assumed a menacing significance. In July 1936 and again in October of the same year, Savage had been ill, cancelling some appointments and having other ministers cover the remainder.[70] His friend Jordan suggested that Savage's illness might have been the result of over-work and worry, and advised him, 'don't take life too seriously'.[71] At the end of 1937 the weekly newspaper *Truth* noted of Savage that

> During the closing stages of the last session it was freely commented upon that a good deal of his old-time geniality and animation were missing. . . . his duties have been of an exhausting nature, but he was always in his place, even though he did not appear to be quite his usual self.[72]

It was with a feeling of considerable relief, therefore, that the tired Savage, a few days before Christmas 1937, returned to Auckland, accompanied by Webb, for a fortnight's holiday at the Hotel Cargen. Savage told one journalist that 'so far as is humanly possible I want to forget about the affairs of state for a while. Everybody looks forward to the Christmas season in Auckland as a time to feel that one is free. I just want to be in that category'.[73] He told another reporter that he was 'looking forward to a few days rest, "and I need it badly", he added wistfully.'[74]

Christmas Day 1937 was spent quietly with a broadcast at 9 a.m., his traditional visit to Auckland Hospital at 10.30, and Christmas dinner with Aruba Alfrey and her family. During that peaceful fortnight Savage renewed acquaintances with old friends, chatting over a glass of ale. He sat in the sun relaxing with his pipe and a book. He strolled down Queen Street enjoying the bustle and rush of last-minute Christmas shopping. He watched flying boats arriving on the Waitemata Harbour to start a new air service.[75] He went to the races at Ellerslie and the trotting at Epsom and stated, 'Just give me a race card and a paddock full of horses and I will enjoy myself, at least for a day or two. Nobody enjoys a race meeting more than I do, but few men go to race meetings who do less betting than I do.'[76]

On 4 January 1938, after meeting Davis and Liston and visiting the Captain Cook Brewery, Savage returned to Wellington and resumed normal office hours except for the occasional visit to the races.

On 8 February 1938 Savage was taken ill with severe stomach pain caused by a bowel obstruction. He wrote to Jordan that 'I had something of the same kind of trouble years ago'.[77] Unable to attend meetings of cabinet or caucus, Savage spent the rest of the month being X-rayed and examined by doctors. His niece Doris, who with a friend was planning a holiday in New Zealand with her uncle, received a letter from him confirming the visit, despite the fact that 'I am, at present, under medical care but hope to be alright in a day or two'.[78]

Savage seemed to have recovered and returned to his office on 23 February. He moved quickly to quell growing speculation that his health might force his retirement. Accompanied by Mr and Mrs French, he went the following Saturday to the Wairarapa LRC's picnic and the next day travelled to Auckland to attend a reception for an Apostolic Delegate, the Most Rev. J. Panico, and Catholic Church celebrations in the Auckland Town Hall. While in Auckland he went for a drive with Ernest Davis to the crippled children's home at Takapuna, had afternoon tea at Davis's home in St Heliers, and dined with the Alfreys.[79] He then returned to Wellington for the reopening of Parliament.

The arrival of Doris for a month's holiday on 5 March cheered Savage up considerably and he snatched a few days to take her to Rotorua. On the trip back they stopped at Palmerston North. There he visited three secondary schools and Massey College, where the students took him for a ride in a wheelbarrow; had lunch with the city council; attended a public reception and garden party in the afternoon; and finally was guest at a concert and addressed a crowd of over 2000 in the evening.[80]

Despite all his activity and although the Labour Caucus recorded its pleasure at Savage's apparent restoration to full health,[81] speculation and rumours continued to be expressed widely and publicly.[82] Savage admitted he needed to take things easier because 'I have been burning the candle at both ends, as a man must do in this job of mine, and I am just paying for that now.'[83] But even some Labour MPs continued to fuel the speculations that Savage was more than just tired. In Wanganui in June, for example, the local Labour MP, Joe Cotterill, told Savage in front of 2500 people that many were concerned that the Prime Minister 'was dying of cancer'. Savage replied that 'as far as he knew he might be dying of old age, but not of cancer.'[84] A few days before Savage had reassured a Woodville audience that 'Although some of my political opponents have been burying me for six months I thank the Lord that I am in pretty good health and I feel like going a long way.'[85] Despite his brave optimism, Savage did not get very far.

In mid-June, 'tired of hearing the Government being pulled to pieces in Parliament', Savage had decided to 'get away' and 'hear what the jury, the people thought about it'.[86] Accompanied by his constant travelling companion, Webb, and Bob Semple, and in teeming rain and gale-force winds, Savage set out to visit some forty towns in the southern part of

the North Island. On his first day he visited the public works camp at Pukerua Bay; then on to Paekakariki; Otaki; Ohau; Levin, where he spoke to 600 people; Shannon; Foxton, addressing a meeting of 800; and Feilding, where he spoke to another 800.[87] The pace never let up. Savage found himself speaking up to fourteen times a day. In the Pahiatua electorate he had meetings at Woodville (500 present), Dannevirke (900), Norsewood (200), Takapau (600), Ormondville (100), Matamau (150), Makotuku (50), and Pahiatua (900).[88] Then he crisscrossed the Manawatu and Rangitikei electorates, stopping at every small country school he found. In Taranaki he visited Ratana Pa and promised that he would continue to do his best to resolve land grievances and to try to have the Treaty of Waitangi placed on the statute book.[89]

In July and August Savage shifted his attention to the South Island. Although he tried to limit the number of formal meetings, his itinerary was still very crowded.[90] For example, on Tuesday 2 August he left Waimate by car at 8.30 a.m. During the day he stopped numerous times along the road, for example talking to a girl in an invalid's chair and spending a few minutes with three men, a woman and two children who had waited for an hour in the snow near Alford Forest to see him. He addressed nine meetings in centres through which he passed that day, concluding with a crowd of 1300 in Ashburton. In Kaiapoi the mayor, Rev. W. H. A. Vickery, in welcoming Savage said, 'If care for the poor, improvements in the conditions of old age pensioners, and the drafting of invalidity pensions is Socialism, then I want to give it another designation, and to say that to me it is applied Christianity.'[91] Savage congratulated the mayor on his eloquence and was to remember and repeat later with acknowledgement on many occasions the term 'applied Christianity' to describe the social security scheme. At midnight Savage finally reached Christchurch.[92]

At his meetings Savage quite uncharacteristically indulged in reminiscences about his childhood and youth in Australia. He told schoolchildren about his own tiny school at Rothesay and the teacher whom 'he looked upon as . . . his greatest friend outside of his parents.'[93] He told farmers about the 'poor farm in Australia' on which he had been brought up[94] and that 'Though I was born in the same district in which Ned Kelly did his bushranging, I did not inherit his methods.'[95] At Methven he compared the Rangitata irrigation works to the North Yanco scheme where he had worked his 'tumbling Tommy' scoop so many years before.[96]

Savage continued to deny that he was seriously ill, claiming that 'The tour did me more good than all the chemists' shops in New Zealand could do' and that although 'some people have been burying me for the past six months . . . I have refused to lie down.'[97] But there were indications that Savage realised that his time was running out. He told one audience, 'We are here today and gone tomorrow. . . . Remember that though some

As Prime Minister, Savage enjoyed visiting schools and talking with children. *NZ Education Gazette and Public Service Journal*

PENSIONS FOR THE NEEDY

Under NATIONAL Rule

Miners' phthisis, war, veterans', blind, etc. pensions were reduced as much as 29 per cent. in some instances.

The aged and the infirm were generally dependent on charity to supplement their meagre resources.

Under LABOUR Rule

Pension cuts restored and increases made. Residential period reduced.
Amount paid to Old Age Pensioners has more than doubled since 1935.
Deserted wives' pensions instituted.
War and veterans' pensions show an increase of over £400,000 yearly.
Widows are receiving £188,000 more.
Total cost of all pensions £6,769,423.

LET LABOUR FINISH THE JOB

Labour made prominent use of Savage's name, face and comments in all its 1938 election advertising. *NZLP*

FARMERS' PROBLEMS

Under NATIONAL Rule

Production doubled, yet income halved.
Ruination and bankruptcy staring 50,000 farmers in the face.

Under LABOUR Rule

Guaranteed price gives security and stability to farmers.
Increased production means increased income.
Received £338,757 above London parity.
Mortgage liability reduced by £1,107,115 as at 31/12/37.
£317,080 arrears of interest remitted.

KEEP LABOUR IN POWER

UNEMPLOYMENT

Under NATIONAL Rule	*Under LABOUR Rule*
A total of 35,979 registered unemployed in November, 1935. Only physically fit allowed to register. Old clothes drives and soup kitchens. Sustenance rates: Single men averaged about 10/- weekly; married men, seven children, about 30/- weekly.	Unemployed reduced to 16,367, and of these 8,000 are physically unfit for work, although allowed to register for sustenance. **Actual unemployed as at February 12, 1938, only 7,241.** Sustenance and relief payments greatly increased.

LET LABOUR FINISH THE JOB

INVALID PENSIONS

Under NATIONAL Rule	*Under LABOUR Rule*
No provision made. Dependent on charity.	Married man £1 weekly with 10/- for wife and each dependent child. 10,000 invalids now in receipt of pensions of an annual total value of £650,000. Health expenditure has increased by £444,000 compared with 1935.

KEEP LABOUR IN POWER

READ THIS COMMENT BY THE *"DAIRY EXPORTER"*

"The marketing of our dairy produce to-day is on a level of efficiency higher than ever before, as anyone who honestly studies the position must agree, and to suggest that we should move back would be resented by almost every section of the industry."

—("Exporter," August 1, 1938.)

Under the Labour Government, the sense of security given the farmer by the guaranteed price and a sound marketing scheme is increased by the Social Security Scheme, and other humane social legislation.

In case of flood and storm damage to his property, assistance is given by grants and the provision of labour. Improved rural educational facilities and the expenditure of £5,000,000 on backblock roads removes the sense of isolation in lonely districts. No longer is the farmer the victim of unfair speculation and Government neglect.

OVERSEAS OPINIONS of M. J. SAVAGE

"A remarkable man, shrewd, progressive minded."
—("Daily Express," London, 14/5/37.)

"One of the most outstanding figures at the Imperial Conference."
—("Evening Standard," London.)

FOR A GUARANTEED INCOME

VOTE LABOUR

This full-page advertisement from *The NZ Dairy Exporter* is another example of the concentration on Savage in Labour's 1938 election publicity.

people may grow rich they can't take their riches to the grave with them. The greatest of all things is the good wishes and love of your fellow-men. . . . don't try to live at the expense of the other fellow.'[98]

On Friday 19 August 1938 Savage and Webb arrived at the Hotel Cargen in Auckland to start a speaking tour of the north. Almost immediately Savage collapsed. After two days in bed and on the advice of Dr E. B. Gunson, Savage cancelled his meetings and returned to Wellington. He called cabinet together and also had private discussions with Fraser, Fagan and Berendsen. Savage told his closest colleagues that X-rays now indicated that he had cancer of the colon, necessitating an urgent operation if he was 'to have a chance of recovery'.[99] His doctors, Gunson and Gordon Anderson, a Wellington surgeon, had told Savage that any delay could be fatal.

The general election was only two months away and Savage saw that election as the culmination of his life's work. The tendency for many voters to equate the party with its leader was recognised as a fact by Savage. A change of leadership could well damage the party in the short term. The 1925 and 1928 elections had shown how quickly parliamentary majorities could come and go. Although he realised that his medical advisers were probably correct, Savage was not prepared to be incapacitated for the election campaign that he hoped would entrench the Labour Government and its policies. The Social Security Bill had to be enacted in Parliament and then confirmed by an election victory against a reunited and rejuvenated National Party Opposition and a hostile press and medical profession. The threat of war in Europe, the possibility of an exchange crisis, the continuing disunity and tensions in caucus, all made Savage reluctant to relinquish the leadership at that time. Tired and sick and holding an office that, he admitted, 'has increased my worries one hundred fold', Savage, recognising his own electoral value to his party, determined to battle on. He was concerned that, 'Our failure would mean failure for Labour everywhere. It must not and will not happen'.[100] When told that the operation 'would lay him on the shelf' for three months, Savage, according to the Anglican Bishop of Wellington, to whom Savage confided the dilemma, 'did what only a man with a consuming passion for his cause could do; he refused the operation, and thereby signed his own death warrant.'[101]

Although he continued to visit a number of doctors and surgeons throughout the election campaign,[102] Savage did not enter hospital and merely tried to minimise the symptoms by retiring about 9 p.m., walking two miles each morning in the botanical gardens or along the waterfront and by taking great care with his diet.[103] He told Webb,

> This is going to be the testing election of the Labour Government. If, after three years' legislation, we regain the Treasury benches, I am convinced that a continuation, for another three years, of the good work already done, will establish the Labour Party in office indefinitely. I feel

> that the best service I can give the cause and the people, is to fight on and if we are victorious at the poll, that will be my compensation. I will die happy.[104]

To the casual observer during September, the faith-healer Ratana's wish that Savage would be restored to health 'to continue his mission which the great God had called him to do'[105] appeared to have been met. But Savage was restricting his office hours from 9.30 until 4 p.m. and, although he continued to lead the government in Parliament and oversee the passage of the Social Security Bill, by mid-September he was having difficulty concealing his constant physical pain and the mental and emotional anguish caused not only by the cancer but also by tensions and anxieties at home and abroad. His optimism and patience were sorely tried, particularly by Lee, who continued to attack Savage personally and his policies on the economy and defence. Lee, who did not share his leader's tolerance and belief in maintaining personal friendships even in the midst of political differences, discounted any suggestion that Savage was really sick, preferring to believe that

> Every crisis that arises gives him a pain in the bowels. Thinking has always given him a bellyache. . . . Savage sounded weak and worn over phone today. Has received a shock and is unsure of himself. These physical emotional crises will recur more frequently unless he lets the young bloods and Nash-Fraser fight it out. Every time he attempts to head us off he will get ill. . . . If he becomes neutral we shall win.[106]

A few days later, Lee added in his diary, 'The old fellow runs from every problem because every time he stands he gets a pain in the bowels. Caucus will deal with him if we do not get too many new recruits'.[107] Little wonder that an independent observer described Savage at the end of the parliamentary session and at the start of the 1938 election campaign as,

> the man who is struggling to hold to hope and to health. . . . Mr Savage still sticking to it valiantly, sitting up very straight, with that perpetually Sunday-best look of his, thin, sometimes pale, defying rumour. 'Everything will be all right', he seems to go on saying. But . . . time marches on.[108]

During the 1938 election year Savage had to cope not only with his illness and rumours about it but also with other more malicious stories about his ethnic origin. His colleague Schramm claimed in Parliament that women were being paid £1 per day to go door to door saying that Savage was a non-naturalised Czechoslovakian called Michael Josephus Savitchovich, and Schramm facetiously suggested that the next allegation would be that Bob Semple's real name was Bobinski Sampoli.[109] Savage himself, at a number of meetings, referred to the allegations, saying that,

> I have been born in many countries. I have been an Italian and then a Dalmatian, then I wandered through quite a lot of countries in Central Europe until I arrived in Russia. . . . My parents were from Ireland. I am not ashamed of them and I would not be wherever they had come from.[110]

The persistence of the rumour was such, however, that more than forty years later, in 1981, a senior Labour MP who became a cabinet minister in 1984 assured the author that he had it on very good authority that the story about Savage really being an East European gypsy called Savitchovich was true. A prominent journalist also recalled that, 'some thought his features were southern European and that Savage may have been a corruption of a Slav name, but I never heard that impression confirmed.'

Comments about Savage's marital status were even more widespread inside and outside the Labour Party. Although the accusation was still made occasionally that he had deserted a wife and five children, or, less seriously, that he had been guilty of 'breach of promise',[111] most critics simply referred to the fact that Savage had never married. Some such comments were jocular, as when the chairman of the Oxford County Council in Canterbury, introducing Savage, suggested that the sixty-six-year-old Prime Minister should seriously consider matrimony. 'I'm afraid I left it a bit late,' retorted Savage.[112] At other times the comments were barbed, such as, 'as a bachelor himself Mr Savage has no knowledge of the difficulties often experienced in their early days by those who take on the responsibilities of married life',[113] or that he was one of the 'bachelors who have dodged their duties and responsibilities and who know nothing whatever about the trials and troubles of those who have brought up families . . . who ought to be ashamed of themselves'.[114] That attitude was held by some Labour MPs, Morgan Williams, for example, noting that

> It was not to be expected that a man like Savage, who had never had a wife to resist his will, would appreciate the value of an irritating element like the Left Wing. . . . Naturally he was, I believe, a kindly and well-intentioned man. . . . Unfortunately he did not have a wife to tell him how ordinary he was.[115]

From time to time Savage even had to deny that he intended becoming engaged, in 1937, for example, to the widow of Sir George Hunter, a woman Savage recalled having met only once. As *Truth* commented on that occasion, the simple answer to the question of Savage's marital status may well have been expressed in Kipling's couplet:

> Down to Gehenna or up to the Throne
> He travels the fastest who travels alone.[116]

One of the priorities of the Labour Government elected in 1935 was the creation of a health and superannuation scheme to provide adequate financial support for those who were ill or aged. As an interim measure it was proposed to increase old-age pensions from 17*s.* 6*d.* per week. Initial suggestions of 30*s.* per week were opposed by Treasury and after considerable debate in caucus a 5*s.* increase in two instalments was approved. Savage's reluctance to go immediately to 30*s.* disappointed and angered Lee and other back-benchers but there was little they could do

about it. The *Herald*'s parliamentary reporter, Hintz, 'heard of this incipient revolt and I taxed him with it. "This is not for the paper," he said, "but I spoke to them in caucus this morning. I told them that if they tried to take the bit between their teeth I would go to the Governor-General and resign. And my resignation would carry the resignation of the Government with it. There won't be any more trouble there." '[117]

Various committees were set up to draft legislation for a more radical social security scheme. Nash chaired a cabinet committee that, before Nash departed overseas in October 1936, proposed a funded superannuation scheme. This provoked a strong adverse reaction in caucus. Caucus also resisted attempts by Fraser, who was under considerable pressure from the British Medical Association, to reduce Labour's plans for a completely free medical system. Most of the subsequent detailed work on social security fell to a select committee chaired by Dr Gervan McMillan, the author of the 1935 pamphlet *A National Health Service. New Zealand of Tomorrow*; a caucus committee chaired by Rev. Arnold Nordmeyer; and an inter-departmental committee of senior public servants chaired by J. H. Boyes of the Public Service Commission. A committee of inquiry into septic abortion, also chaired by McMillan, was extended to investigate the maternity scheme. McMillan had been interested in a universal, contributory health scheme since his student days at Otago University College fifteen years before. Some of his ideas had been tested at the Waitaki hydro scheme where, in co-operation with the unions and the Waitaki Hospital Board, he had established a medical insurance scheme based on a capitation principle whereby a doctor was paid a certain fixed amount for each patient registered with the doctor irrespective of the amount of medical attention the patient required during the period covered. A voracious reader, McMillan had also studied literature on overseas systems.

By January 1938 cabinet was ready to frame the social security legislation. Caucus, however, was taken aback when the proposals were submitted to it on 10 and 11 February 1938. Savage was ill and Fraser was in the chair.[118] McMillan was also ill and missed the caucus. As Lee's diary reveals, he was intent not only on pushing for amendments to the suggested scheme but also on advancing himself as a rival of Fraser for the leadership if and when Savage retired or died.[119] The cabinet proposals included health, unemployment and superannuation benefits financed by a flat tax of 1*s*. 6*d*. on wages, salaries and other incomes. All would receive a superannuation payment at age sixty-five calculated on a percentage of the contributor's annual income with a minimum payment of 30*s*. weekly.[120] Fraser suggested again a partially free medical system for only the poor-based on a means test and reflecting the intense lobbying from the BMA, in particular its energetic and tenacious spokesman Dr James Jamieson, a Nelson general practitioner of Scottish origin.[121] The majority of caucus did not like Nash's funded superannuation or Fraser's

two-tier system of health care.

Throughout February and March, McMillan, Nordmeyer, Lee and others in caucus fought against Nash's funded superannuation scheme and Fraser's partial health scheme.[122] Savage, who wanted a universal pension scheme without a means test, supported Nash but immediately revealed that he disagreed with Fraser. Savage wanted a universal health scheme with no distinctions among patients on financial grounds. On 4 March 1938 Savage moved the establishment of a caucus committee consisting of Nordmeyer (chairman), Nash, Sullivan, Barclay, Lyon and Barnard to prepare and submit to caucus concrete proposals for a health and superannution scheme. He also announced that such a scheme would then be considered by a parliamentary committee of eleven MPs drawn from both sides of the House. The seven Labour members of that committee would be himself, Nash, Nordmeyer, Barnes, O'Brien, Richards and Robertson.[123] The caucus committee chaired by Nordmeyer reported back to caucus on 29 and 30 March and 25 and 26 April and, with only a few amendments, its recommendations were approved.

In April 1938 Savage formally presented a White Paper containing a general outline of the government's social security scheme to the parliamentary select committee, after first releasing the proposals in a speech broadcast from the Labour Party's Easter conference. The party delegates packed into the Wellington Town Hall erupted into wild enthusiasm and, despite some criticism and questioning of the scheme's cost and practicability, the proposals soon gripped the imagination of the country. Throughout April, Savage was very busy, participating fully in the work of the select committee.

The Social Security Bill, which embodied the principle of 'from each according to his or her means to each according to need', finally came before Parliament on 12 August 1938. Nash, who would be responsible for funding the scheme, was made the minister in charge of the legislation, which was the crowning achievement of the first Labour Government and probably the most important single piece of legislation in New Zealand's history. The bill provided for a universal, free health system covering general practitioners, public and mental hospitals, and maternity care; a means-tested old-age pension of 30s. a week for men and women at age sixty; and a truly universal superannuation payment at age sixty-five of £10 per year rising annually by £2. 10s. until it reached the same amount as the old-age pension. The pension at sixty was a short-term recognition of need. The universal superannuation at sixty-five was to be a right.

Various people, including Lee, claimed that the last provision was their idea.[124] Nordmeyer, however, recalled that he made the specific suggestion to satisfy Savage, who was insisting that everyone had a right, through citizenship, to a pension without the indignity of a means test and that if superannuation could be paid to MPs and public servants as

of right it could be provided for everyone else.[125]

According to Savage, the bill was not only socially just but economically sound because 'It is distribution which is largely provided for in this Bill' and that would increase purchasing power and stimulate demand.[126] To Savage, the major economic problem was always the distribution of production and the means of achieving it efficiently and justly. By 'distribution' Savage also implied some redistribution of income from those able to 'fend for themselves' to those 'deprived of means'.

The National Opposition resisted the measure, arguing that it could not be funded and would lead to financial disaster; that it would socialise the medical profession; and that it penalised thrift. One National MP, Sidney Holland, who was eventually to replace Hamilton as National's leader, claimed social security was not 'applied Christianity' but 'applied lunacy',[127] and another opposition MP, not comprehending the electoral appeal of the legislation, observed, 'We have Savage and Co. fiddling with a super pension scheme. . . . We are going to put a stop to this sort of thing when we get into power.'[128]

Although Nash took the bill through its parliamentary stages, it was Savage, as one newspaper editor commented, who 'shepherded the bill through the inquiry stage, vigilantly watched its progress through Parliament, and then set out to convince a majority of the electors that he was right'.[129] Only history, the editor suggested, would tell whether Savage's 'tenacity and singleness of purpose' was 'obstinate' or 'far-sighted and courageous'. Certainly, McMillan, Nordmeyer, Fraser, Nash, and various public servants such as John Reid, Bernard Ashwin and George Maddex, had more to do with the detailed negotiations and drafting of the legislation than Savage. But Savage in no way had to be forced by Lee, Fraser or Nash to develop and pass the social security legislation. On the contrary, he was the conductor responsible for the overall performance of his government. The Prime Minister kept pushing his colleagues; tried to resolve deep divisions of opinion within caucus over principles and details; and made public pronouncements, such as that no-one would be worse off under the new social security scheme and that superannuation would be paid to all. Those pledges had to be honoured and were, with some difficulty by those responsible for the detailed legislation.

Savage was particularly strong in countering opposition to the scheme. When National criticised him for his aggressive attitude on the committee of inquiry and for not allowing the head of Treasury to give evidence against the financial viability of social security to the all-party committee, Savage replied, 'we did not want the head of Treasury to tell us what our policy was to be.'[130] When the doctors threatened that they would not support, or even co-operate in, the implementation of the legislation if it was passed, Savage condemned them for threatening a 'sit-down strike'.[131] When Jamieson complained that the government had not

given the BMA an advance copy of the final draft of the bill, Savage publicly castigated Jamieson and the BMA for its opposition to the legislation and their attempt to divide patients into those who could pay and those who had to beg charity.[132]

To Savage, the Social Security Bill was an attempt

> for the first time to provide, as generously as possible, for all persons who have been deprived of the power to obtain a reasonable livelihood through age, illness, unemployment, widowhood, or other misfortune. No one will claim that the provision now being made is the ultimate achievement possible, but it is an advance towards the ideal of universal security.[133]

The Prime Minister argued that 'it was the inalienable right of every person to be secured against distress in any form' and that 'what is not good enough for me is not good enough for the fellow I am representing in this House, whether it be a house or an income.'[134] After years on a local charitable aid committee he deeply disliked and resented the embarrassment and humiliation of hospital patients having to ask for charity.[135] While he did not suggest that a worker should 'fool away his wages' and then rely on the state in old age and invalidity, Savage saw no reason why people should be pauperised and forced 'to describe how much money their grandmothers have got' before they received an income from society sufficient to maintain a reasonable standard of living.[136]

The Social Security Act was passed on 13 September 1938, only a little over four weeks before the 1938 election. The credit was not all the Prime Minister's; certainly, other remarkable people inside and outside cabinet made significant contributions. Social security was a team effort rather than the creation of any one person. But when, as one informed but impartial observer recalled, 'everything seemed to be bogging down in the detail, he [Savage] himself decided on a basic scheme, cut all the knots of argument and went to the country on it. It was his boldest and swiftest stroke in politics.'[137] His ability to mobilise the team was in itself evidence of his true leadership ability, for indeed 'one man leadership' is a contradiction in terms. The essential quality in practical leadership is getting things done by others, not doing everything oneself. Savage insisted, in the face of some dissent from Lee and others in caucus, that the act contain a provision that it would not come into force until 1 April 1939. The Nationalists, who had opposed its passage, would clearly revoke the act if they won the election. Savage had set the agenda for the election and Nash and others, in hindsight, recognised that his strategy virtually guaranteed a Labour victory.

The powerful appeal that the Prime Minister was preparing to make to the electorate was previewed in his address in the 1938 budget debate.

> I want to know why people should not have decent wages, why they should not have decent pensions in the evening of their days, or when

> they are invalided. What is there more valuable in our Christianity than to be our brother's keepers in reality. . . . I want to see humanity secure against poverty, secure in illness or old age. . . . If the leader of the Opposition or those with him can show us a better way out we will adopt their plan. We are here to serve, not merely to talk.[138]

The Labour Party's 1938 election policy was drafted by a committee of Savage, Nash, Fraser, Roberts and Wilson, who took into account a preliminary report from a caucus committee consisting of Langstone, McMillan, McCombs, Lee and Thorn. Although the first four major planks in the twenty-eight-point manifesto emphasised the use of state-controlled credit at low interest rates for farming, housing and the development of secondary industry, the social security scheme was the major plank.[139]

Publicity was in the hands of another committee made up of the five members of the policy committee with the addition of Sullivan and Lee. It deluged New Zealand with newspaper and magazine advertisements, picture theatre slides, large hoardings, small posters, a special election film, and 2 500 000 copies of various pamphlets, including 10 000 copies in the Maori language of Savage's speech to the recent Maori conference. Savage's face and extracts from his speeches were featured pervasively throughout the advertising.

Radio was used systematically for the first time in a New Zealand election. Labour was allocated six broadcasts, National four, and independents two. Savage opened the campaign and used the medium very effectively, as the newspapers admitted.[140] Lee was also selected to give one of Labour's broadcasts, after initially being left out, an omission he took, as usual, very personally.[141] Certainly Lee, who spoke forcefully, distinctly and with flashes of brilliance, was able to use radio well. Some observers thought he was even better than Savage, one newspaper noting that

> Next to Mr Lee, the Prime Minister is Labour's best radio speaker. . . . Someone must have been telling Mr Savage about his 'Now then', as he has been making conscious efforts to avoid saying it. It seems a pity that just when this pregnant phrase was passing into the national vocabulary with a sort of halo clinging to it, its author should become self-conscious and try to forget it.[142]

Savage, however, the journalist observed, seemed to have the ability to keep an audience enthralled from the beginning to the end of his address, 'whereas Mr Lee . . . grew somewhat tedious after the first hour through constant repetition and harping on the theme of "Lies, lies, lies" '.[143] Lee also disliked opposition or interjections, as his diary reveals: 'Went to Marton last night. Talked to 750. One bitch of a woman interjected and then some. Too stupid to be wounded.'[144]

Lee, whom National attacked throughout the election as a likely successor to Savage, citing frequently the more radical passages of his

recently published book *Socialism in New Zealand*, was much more active and prominent in 1938 than he had been during the 1935 campaign. He spoke mainly in secondary towns, usually in support of his allies in caucus: O'Brien, Williams, Nordmeyer, Carr, McMillan, Barnard, Wilson, Hultquist. In private, Lee was noting in his diary, 'M.J.S. poor stuff. I thought he would be good because he would be obedient. He is no good because he has come to believe he is a great leader'.[145] In public, however, Lee's defence of Savage was spirited. In Hastings, for example, he claimed that

> Michael Joseph Savage is in the dock. He is a criminal in the eyes of the National Party. The crime he has committed is that in two and a half years of his Government New Zealand advanced more in national wealth than in any other two and a half years in New Zealand's history.[146]

Because of his illness, Savage did not tour as extensively during the 1938 election campaign as he had done in 1935, though the speeches he did give were still vigorous, assertive, sincere and very compelling. The National Government, Savage believed, had lost the 1935 election as much as Labour had won it. The 1938 contest would be a totally different election, with Labour having to persuade people to vote positively for it rather than negatively against National.

The issues of credit and monetary reform remained prominent themes in his speeches, with Savage arguing that trade cycles were created artificially by private banks limiting the availability of sufficient money for production and consumption.[147] Savage, however, made it plain from his first meeting, broadcast from the Wellington Town Hall on Thursday 22 September, that the 1938 election would be fought on three main issues: social security, guaranteed dairy prices, and industrialisation. National could either agree that these three policies were good or criticise them. Either way, he suggested, Labour won votes.

Throughout the campaign the Prime Minister used a basic set of speech notes, varying the address slightly according to the particular audience.[148] He started with a summary of the government's record over the previous three years. He then argued that New Zealand could be insulated against another world depression and could maintain employment and living standards by basing the New Zealand money system on production and by using public credit to prevent recessions in the domestic economy. He emphasised the advantages of guaranteed prices and incomes for farmers. He talked about employment, industrialisation, housing and the need to give 'the working people' enough money not only for necessities but also 'for the moderate luxuries of life, for summer holidays, for presents and pleasures for the children'. Then he came to social security, which invariably occupied the bulk of his election addresses. The measure was designed primarily to provide 'security against financial worries of all citizens who suffer disabilities'. He was 'accused of being

a sentimental idealist . . . but I am willing to be judged by the people on the practical results of my idealism'. If leadership is judged by the real change that leaders bring about in people's lives, then Savage was a very successful leader.

Some idea of the impact of Savage's message comes from just reading parts of his address, which reflect a lifetime's experience and observation starting sixty-six years before on the little farm at Rothesay. Describing the social security scheme with sincere simplicity, he told his audiences that 'The day is past for looking on poverty as a Heaven-sent reason for charity'. The purpose of social security was

> to make an end to poverty in New Zealand. . . . The benefits cover everybody from infants in their cots to old men and women sitting in the chimney corners. Orphans, invalids and those unable to think or work for themselves are safeguarded against want and neglect. No-one can become an economic burden to relatives or friends. . . . Every doctor knows that thousands of lives have been sacrificed because of belated attention through fear of expense. There is no more pathetic hindrance to recovery of health than a sick person's cry: 'I can't afford to call a doctor or to stop working'. The Social Security Act makes an end to that sad plight.[149]

Savage emphasised especially, in precise, matter-of-fact, almost terse statements, the provisions being made for women who were unemployed, sick, widowed, deserted by their husbands and left with the care of children.

> Women and children who, after all, are the most important people in the country, will not fare very well if the Social Security Act is repealed. . . .
>
> Before and after the birth of a child the mother will receive all essential treatment free of charge. A mother will be given free maternity service. Every expectant mother will also have the right to select her own doctor, and the right to choose the maternity nurse who attends her in her own home.
>
> The best service that the nation with all its resources can provide will be provided as a right. There will be no discrimination because of the individual's economic position.
>
> The Nationalists declare that such services should be given freely only to the poor.
>
> Thus the most important care and treatment in a mother's life is to depend on the principle of charity, if the mother has no money.
>
> Under the Social Security Act medical, nursing service and domestic help in the mother's own home are to be given without any obligation on the part of the mothers.[150]

The Prime Minister ended passionately that 'those who do not need help should sincerely thank God for their good fortune' but that any person

> may ache with laughter in the evening and be stricken with disease next morning or maimed at work or on the highway. . . . The Social Security

> Act is a practical safeguard against the ills of life and the inexorable advance of old age, and I would remind you that the Leader of the Opposition says the Act will not be allowed to operate if he is returned to power.

Savage's audiences cheered every sentence. Such a scheme, the Prime Minister asserted, would help 'bring the Kingdom of God on earth' and once social security was firmly established 'he would be ready to die then and he would die in peace.'[151] His opponents said that the government was rushing the election because he only had days to live. Savage did not deny the possibility but simply said that he hoped that he had longer but 'one swallow did not make a summer, and if he did pass away New Zealand would still survive.'[152] Savage made such comments not only in public but in private conversation with others in the party. As he drove through the Manawatu electorate shortly before the election, for example, he told its Labour MP, Lowrie Hunter, 'I may die and they may defeat us one day. But no matter how they try they'll never be able to undo Social Security.'[153]

The Prime Minister's election campaign was a triumphant success. A crowd estimated at between 8000 and 13 000 crammed into the King Edward Barracks giving Savage the 'largest audience known in political history in Christchurch', and the final words of the welcoming haka

> were submerged by a deafening roar of applause that went up from eight thousand throats as Mr Savage walked to the platform. Hats and newspapers were tossed in the air while the cheering and applause continued. It was a scene more reminiscent of the embankment at Lancaster Park at the height of a Ranfurly Shield match than a political meeting.[154]

People continued to turn out in their thousands to hear Savage: 5000 in Dunedin, 4000 in New Plymouth, 3000 in Palmerston North, an overflow meeting in Hamilton.[155] Savage was moved by such support from adult voters but, during the day, 'Joe always wanted to stop where kids were. Children asked for nothing. Adults were always asking for something.'[156] In Auckland the audience filled the Town Hall and packed the adjacent Concert Chamber. A further 1000 people crowded outside in Queen Street listening to the address over loud-speakers. At the end of the meeting, Savage stood in the street, without overcoat or hat in a cold westerly wind, for over half an hour shaking hands with ecstatic supporters.[157]

The campaign finished in Wellington, where 15–20 000 people met his train. Savage was led by a pipe band to the grounds of Parliament Buildings to address a huge crowd, estimated in excess of 30 000, on Labour's policy, which he described as 'the process of levelling-up, not levelling-down'.[158] One observer wrote to Nash,

> I have never felt such alarm as I did when I accidentally had to pass through the crowd welcoming the Prime Minister at the Railway Station

> before the election. There was something terrifyng to me in the unrestrained emotion of that mob mind, dumbly and subconsciously due to the fact that they recognised a higher form of kindred spirit, a personality ruled by heart rather than by mind.[159]

The night before the election Savage broadcast a final election message. He assured his listeners that Labour stood for personal freedom in all its forms, including freedom from want as well as political freedom, and he asked for a mandate to implement the Social Security Act.

Although the editor of the *Dominion* on the morning of polling day warned his readers that 'If the Socialist Government is returned to power your vote today may be the last free individual vote you will ever be given the opportunity to exercise in New Zealand',[160] the election on Saturday 15 October 1938 resulted in a resounding public affirmation of Savage's leadership and his government's policies. In 1935 Labour had won primarily by default, the beneficiary of an unpopular and divided government's rejection. In 1938 Labour won emphatically on its own merits. Its percentage of the votes cast rose from forty-six to almost fifty-six per cent.

As Savage had foreseen and feared, Labour lost some of the seats it had won in 1935 because the anti-Labour vote had come together again. In 1938 there were straight Labour-anti-Labour contests in sixty-eight of the eighty electorates, compared to only fifteen in 1935.[161] Labour MPs were defeated in Waitaki, Tauranga, Waipawa, Hauraki, Mid-Canterbury, Manawatu, Waikato and Rangitikei. Chalmers had been abolished. But Labour's strength in Parliament slipped only from fifty-five to fifty-three because those nine losses were almost entirely compensated for by Labour victories in seven other seats that it had not held prior to the election: Bay of Islands, Wellington Suburbs, Wellington West, New Plymouth, Otahuhu, Motueka and Northern Maori. Labour would also probably have won Ngata's Eastern Maori seat had three Labour Party members, unsuccessful in the party's pre-selection ballot, not stood anyway, splitting the official Labour candidate's vote. All Labour's seats in 1938 were won with a majority of the votes cast in the electorate, compared to 1935 when twenty-two Labour MPs were elected with less than half the votes polled.

A jubilant Savage gained 11 591 votes in Auckland West, the highest vote recorded for any candidate at the elections anywhere in New Zealand, although Lee, who received only seven votes less in Grey Lynn, had the largest majority with Savage the second largest. Broadcasting his thanks to the voters, Labour's leader, after paying tribute to Harry Holland and sympathising with his defeated colleagues, observed, 'It is not for me to lick the wounds of our opponents, but I can at least refrain from rubbing salt into them. They also fought strenuously in an honest belief in their cause'.[162] In private Savage was even more magnanimous to some of his defeated political enemies. He told Hintz that the young National MP, Keith Holyoake, who had been defeated in Motueka, was 'a good lad. . . . He'll get back into the House and he'll lead his party some day. And

after they have learned from us, they'll be a better party than they are now. I'll miss him in the House. I've sent him a telegram to tell him so'.[163]

Savage embarked on his renewed term as Prime Minister promising that, 'the luxuries of today were the necessaries of tomorrow and there was nothing too good for the people of New Zealand. . . . The best music, the best means of travel, the best education, the best of everything. . . . that is our objective.'[164]

XII
THE 'YEARS OF HELL'
1938–39

SAVAGE INTENDED AFTER the 1938 election to visit Australia, in company with Webb, to see his remaining brother, Rowland, and accept an invitation to attend a reunion in Rutherglen. His health and responsibilities in New Zealand forced him reluctantly to put off the trip.[1] Instead, Savage initiated a campaign to establish a Labour daily newspaper.

The power of the mass media worried Savage. He believed that 'The newspaper plays a great part in national life. Newspapers are bigger even than governments. They can make or break a government or a country'.[2] Although friendly with many journalists, with whom he would often have 'a great "schooner" of beer' in the press bar in Bellamy's,[3] Savage disliked many of the papers for which they worked. He heartily detested, in particular, the Wellington *Dominion* and in 1937 had for a week or two refused to allow ministerial statements to be given to all the morning newspapers in retaliation against the *Dominion*'s editorials.[4] The *Dominion*'s 1938 election coverage had further incensed the Prime Minister.

After the 1935 election Savage had tried unsuccessfully to establish a Labour newspaper by raising £100,000 to purchase the plant of the Christchurch *Sun*, which had been going into voluntary liquidation. Three years later he tried again to start a chain of daily newspapers to present a different perspective to the existing papers, whose proprietors and editors, he declared, consistently misrepresented the views, motives and actions of the Labour Government. Within days of the 1938 election a Labour Daily Committee with Savage as chairman and Jim Thorn, MP, as organiser had been set up and an appeal made to party supporters for funds.[5] By the time the 1939 Labour conference met and endorsed the project, £23,000 had been raised and eventually, though not until after

Savage's death, the relatively short-lived *Southern Cross* was launched.[6]

Despite his ill-health before the election, Savage in late 1938 and early 1939 appeared to be coping well with his prime ministerial workload. He celebrated his sixty-seventh birthday quietly, the sisters at the Seatoun Convent sending him a large basket of roses early in the morning to start his day. In the evening his cabinet and caucus colleagues entertained him at an informal party in Bellamy's.[7]

In late March Savage spent a number of days in Auckland touring factories and speaking to crowds of workers, the largest being an audience of some 1700 at the Otahuhu Railway Workshops.[8] He visited the hospital, the Bayfield School and a rest home. He spent evenings chatting with Ernest Davis and Harry Scott Bennett, Savage's old colleague in the Victorian and Auckland socialist movements who was in Auckland again lecturing for the Rationalist Association.

Although his doctors continued to advise an operation, Savage decided to postpone it again so that he could attend the Labour Party's 1939 conference, which he regarded as crucial to resolving the worsening conflict in caucus. Virtually every major Prime Minister in New Zealand's history has faced at some time serious opposition from dissident elements within caucus who criticised his allegedly autocratic leadership style or his failure to represent the 'true' principles for which, the critics claimed, the party had been created. Savage and his caucus were no exceptions.

Labour parties have always been especially difficult parties to lead, despite their emphasis on caucus discipline and solidarity, and the inevitable oligarchical tendencies that enhance the status and influence of the party's most visible parliamentary leaders. Particularly when Labour becomes the government, there emerge obvious differences over who should be in cabinet, and what precisely should be done, to what extent, in what order, and at what pace, to implement the party's platform. These differences over policy and tactics almost invariably become entangled inextricably in personal ambitions, rivalries and jealousies. It is easy for enthusiastic activists and supporters outside Parliament to criticise the apparently cautious parliamentarians or for frustrated backbenchers, driven by unsatisfied desire for office, incompatibility of temperament, genuine differences over policy, or a combination of motives, to condemn the alleged timidity or lack of idealism of senior colleagues in cabinet who appear too preoccupied with day-to-day administrative detail. The New Zealand Labour Party until 1940 was much more fortunate than its British and Australian counterparts in that, perhaps because it had not experienced the strains of office before, there had been no major open split at the parliamentary level.

Savage was undeniably sensitive, possibly over-sensitive, to criticism, especially from those inside or outside the party who doubted his integrity or criticised too fiercely the direction in which or the pace at which his government was moving. Repeatedly he pointed out that the task Labour

had set itself 'is not the work of a week. Some people are impatient. I am impatient too; but looking on from the outside and criticising is a different thing from having the responsibility of doing the job.'[9] The critics did not appreciate the complex difficulties facing the government and were, Savage suggested, rather like spectators at a football match telling the players exactly what to do.[10]

Since May 1936 McMillan, Nordmeyer, Lee and others had been attempting unsuccessfully to persuade Savage to agree that all future appointments to cabinet should be by election in caucus.[11] In August 1938 fourteen Labour MPs had given notice that at the first caucus after the election they would move 'That Cabinet be elected by preferential vote'.[12] Savage told Lee that this was clearly a reflection on himself and the existing cabinet team he was taking to the electorate to be endorsed by popular vote, and that rather than agree to the proposal he would resign as leader or refer the matter to the extra-parliamentary party for its views.[13] According to Lee's biographer, Lee did not inform his allies of Savage's reaction 'but allowed the crisis to develop'.[14] During the election campaign National frequently claimed that after the election the 'left' in caucus would change the composition of cabinet and that Lee would then emerge as Savage's successor. Savage publicly and vigorously defended his cabinet colleagues and his own continued leadership but the press continued to speculate even after the election.

Caucus met on 3 and 4 November 1938. Savage was kept well informed of what the backbench rebels, Lee's self-styled 'mosquito caucus',[15] were planning. He had discussions with Lee a few days before the caucus meeting,[16] and MPs such as Charlie Barrell and Joe Hodgens also reported frequently to the Prime Minister.[17]

Without any preliminary words of congratulation to Savage on the election victory or allowing any opportunity for welcomes to new MPs or condolences to defeated colleagues, Lee, immediately caucus commenced, rose to his feet and moved that Savage be re-elected chairman and leader of the party.[18] Savage said he preferred not to accept that resolution until another matter had been determined and suggested that instead Lee move the resolution of which he had given Savage notice. Lee and Carr then moved that all cabinet positions be considered vacant and that a new cabinet be elected by a preferential vote of all members of caucus. Savage interpreted the motion as a vote of no-confidence in his existing cabinet colleagues and offered to resign. There followed a long and bitter discussion, with Lee at one point refusing to sit down when ordered to by Savage in the chair.[19] Ben Roberts, the MP for Wairarapa, sadly recorded, in a letter of support to Savage and Nash, that the dissidents had ignored the great successes achieved since the party was established and that 'our comrades are worshipping at the shrine of "Democratic" Form and letter—but they do not know the Spirit'.[20] Even one of Lee's closest allies, Lyon, who was subsequently to turn against

New Zealand Labour Party

NORTHERN MAORI ELECTORATE

Te Ika-a-Maui

E Kui ma E Koro ma, E Tama ma, e Hine ma, Pooti mo to Koutou Mokai mo PAIKEA, e awhina nei i te Maui Tupuna Rangitira o enei ra, ia te Haweti e hi-nei i tenei Ika-a-Maui Te Aotearoa mai i nga wai pokarekare, nga wai paruparu, nga wai kikino, a era Kawanatanga, ara te Kawanatanga o te National.

Hapaingia te Ika a Maui ki te ora!
Pooti Reipa! Pooti Paikea!

Maui our Ancestor fished up this Aotearoa of ours from the dark waters of Kiwa.

To-day it is our Rangatira Savage who is fishing up this Maoriland of ours from the gloom and slime of depression caused by the "Old Gang," now the National Party.

This is your opportunity of deciding whether you are going to allow Mr. Savage and his men to go ahead and finish the job of cleaning up the mess.

It is for you to decide whether you want the Maori to regain his old-time prestige, and whether you want our old people to be cared for and our children to have their proper chance in life.

You cannot afford to give the "Old Gang" the chance of dragging us back into the muddy waters of depression.

Therefore VOTE LABOUR!
VOTE PAIKEA!

Worker Printery, Trades Hall, Hobson St, Auck.

This pamphlet by Paikea, Labour's candidate for Northern Maori in 1938, showed 'Rangatira Savage' compared to Maui 'fishing up this Maoriland of ours from the gloom and slime of depression'.

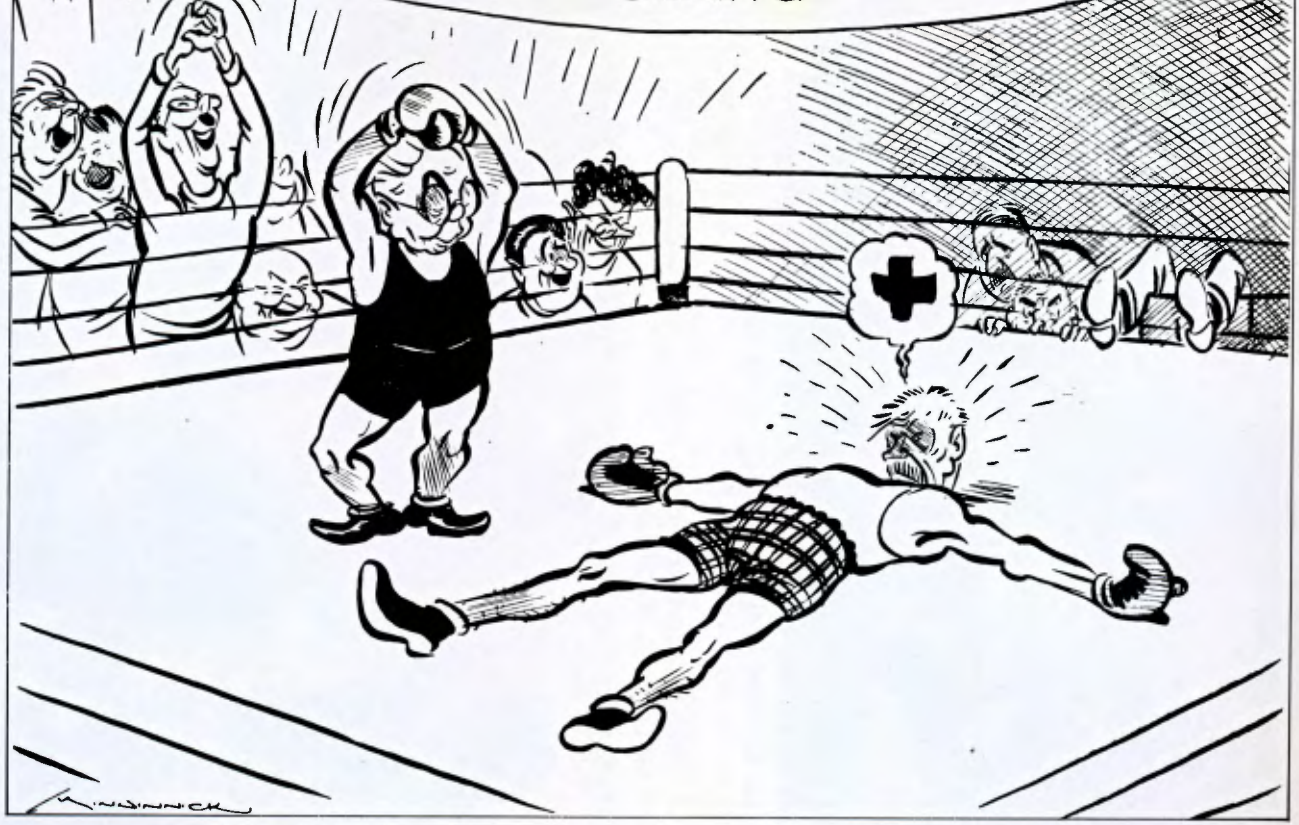
1938 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
Now Then-!
YOU KNOW YOU ARE BETTER OFF SINCE THE ADVENT OF A LABOUR GOVERNMENT
so take no chances
VOTE LABOUR AGAIN

The slides used during the intervals at picture theatres quoted Savage's famous phrase 'Now Then' and indicate the extent to which the campaign emphasised the personalities of the leaders as well as the policies of the parties. *Mr N.V. Douglas*

At the Otahuhu railway workshops, Savage addresses a crowd of 1700 workers during the 1938 election. *Weekly News*

The crowd outside the Auckland Town Hall pushes around Savage as he leaves his 1938 campaign meeting. *Weekly News*

Savage was often photographed in the company of children, who he said 'asked for nothing'. *NZ Herald*



Although Minhinnick's cartoons usually opposed Savage, he was quite prepared to give Savage credit for Labour's convincing victory in 1938 with this cartoon, captioned 'Now Then'. *Sir Gordon Minhinnick and NZ Herald*

Lee, partly as a result of Lee's unremitting personal attacks on Savage, in retrospect recalled,

> What a tragedy it was that personal issues were allowed to obscure political ideology. . . . I realise more than ever how puerile some of our fights in caucus were, and how ridiculous it was that most of our discussions took place in an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion and the comradeship of 1935 was allowed to be dissipated.[21]

Finally, Savage put Lee's motion. Four MPs were not present or abstained. Lee's motion was carried 26 votes to 23. Lee rejoiced in his diary that he had paid Savage back:

> Three years ago Savage did an unfair thing when he selected a Cabinet . . . and left me in the cold. . . . I saw my power grow, grow, grow. . . . I organised the boys, collected their signatures, rallied the vote. . . . M.J.S. tasted the humiliation. Poor old weakling, cork on the stream. . . . He believed he had a majority until the blow fell. . . . The good fellows all my way, the cream of the party.[22]

According to Lee, only the 'Irish informer type' now remained with Savage.[23]

To the surprise, indeed shock, of the triumphant but narrow caucus majority, Savage indicated that, in his opinion, Lee's tactics and policies, if not opposed, would wreck the party. He therefore told caucus that he would not be bound by the resolution and would not allow a vote to be taken on the composition of cabinet until he had referred the matter to the party's national executive and the next annual conference. He declared the meeting closed and there the matter rested until the New Year.

Savage undoubtedly recognised that he was widening the debate and running the risk of dividing the extra-parliamentary party as well as the caucus. But he believed the risk to the party of not doing so was greater. Where did decision-making power ultimately lie? With the elected leader? With cabinet? In caucus? With the party's national executive? With the annual conference? With a consensus based on compromise among them? Savage believed he had the support of all but one or two of his cabinet; of almost half the caucus, which was not simply or irrevocably divided into supporters of Savage or Lee but made up of various factions, individuals, and shifting alliances; of the overwhelming majority of the national executive; of the party at large, both union and non-union members whose will would be expressed through their delegates to conference in a few months' time; and of most of the Labour voters who had just endorsed enthusiastically and decisively his government.

On the other hand, Savage saw the Lee-McMillan faction in caucus as having a narrow but fragile majority made up largely of the more recently recruited white-collar members of the party led by a handful of ambitious place-seekers and supported outside the House by a minority of mainly non-union and anti-Catholic members of the extra-parliamentary party. Many of those in the dissident group were clearly independent, even

idiosyncratic, people not likely for long to work harmoniously together as a team. Savage saw no reason why that small and possibly temporary majority in caucus should commit the party and Parliament to acts of which the cabinet, the majority of Parliament, the Labour Party as a whole, and the country at large disapproved.

Savage resolved to extend the principle and practice of cabinet being responsible to caucus to members of caucus in turn being responsible to the wider party represented by the executive and the conference. He offered, if caucus forced him to act against his judgement on crucial matters, to resign, but first he wanted to appeal to the larger and more representative party bodies. Savage knew of a precedent in New South Wales in 1927 when, in similar circumstances, the ALP caucus there had split into two factions over the Premier's personality and undue union influence on the party. In that case a conference called to resolve the matter had conferred almost dictatorial powers on the Premier and the leading dissident, the Minister of Lands, had resigned and formed a Country Labour Party.[24]

On 6 February 1939, four days before the first caucus meeting of the year, Lee visited Savage and discussed with the Prime Minister the reasons for their mutual enmity. Lee placed all the blame on Savage and, according to Lee, 'I told him I wasn't afraid of Conference. In fact, told him we could lick him and it would not be good to be licked in Conference'.[25] Despite Lee's aggression and unwillingness to discuss defence, a subject Savage tried unsuccessfully to raise, the meeting ended amicably, Lee noting rather revealingly in his diary, 'I can say if Joe accepts some of our political ideas and me, we shall be happy. It's a hell of a lot I am asking'.[26]

It was too much. Savage stood firm. When caucus met on 10 February Lee realised with dismay that his faction no longer had a majority because 'some good fellows have gone over to the enemy, some like Schramm have ratted because of promises'.[27] Lee's diary reflected his frustration, bitterness, and rekindled antagonism towards Savage, who once again had apparently deprived Lee of the victory and the rewards he believed he had won.

The Labour Party Central Executive and the caucus met together on Friday morning, 10 February.[28] The executive asked caucus to consider a compromise proposal whereby the leader would be elected by caucus in the year of a triennial election but prior to the opening of the last session of Parliament. The leader at that meeting would then nominate the members of the cabinet who would be subject to caucus endorsement. If any of the leader's nominees was not approved, then the MPs would recommend privately to the Prime Minister alternative names for his consideration. The leader would resubmit for approval a nomination for any remaining ministerial vacancy, the procedure to continue until both leader and caucus agreed.

A joint committee of Fraser and Nash representing Savage's faction, Barnard and McMillan representing the 'mosquito caucus', and Jim Roberts

and Wilson representing the executive discussed the proposal and reported back.[29] The new procedure was adopted unanimously by the caucus, which then, on the motion of Chapman and Thorn, passed a vote of confidence in Savage and his existing cabinet. The national executive also unanimously approved the agreement at its meeting a fortnight later.[30]

It soon became clear that Savage had got what he wanted, the confirmation of his existing cabinet. There would be no further vote on the matter until the next election year, 1941. He refused to elevate Lee to the post of Minister of Housing, giving the portfolio to Armstrong but asking Lee to continue as under-secretary. Lee was furious. He believed that 'I can no longer be taken into Cabinet because I might be in line for Joe's mantle'.[31] The real battles for supremacy in the party still had to be fought and Lee recognised that the struggle between himself and Savage could end in one of only two ways, 'either a reconciliation or one of us must win. It will scarcely be me for a year or two, except that Savage dies.'[32] To win, without Savage's death, Lee had to destroy Savage's credibility. Lee was worried that such a direct and open attack on the Prime Minister would make so many enemies that, even if he defeated Savage, Fraser and Nash, 'my chance of being PM recedes' and 'a compromise candidate will emerge'.[33] That risk, Lee decided, would have to be taken. Despite McMillan's warning to 'Be careful. Be cautious' or Lee would provide the leadership with an 'excuse for expulsion', and despite Nordmeyer and O'Brien recognising that Lee's egotistical actions were damaging him personally and proving counter-productive to their cause, they could not restrain the tongue and pen of their self-appointed spokesman.[34]

Lee made it quite plain that he intended pressing his attack on Savage and admitted 'I suck a little invective at times because I like the brew.'[35] That tendency to turn every difference over policy or tactics into a personal vendetta was to remain his greatest weakness. Savage was prepared for differences of opinion in cabinet, caucus and the party at large. He was, as Lee admitted, willing on occasions to change his mind as the result of argument. What the Prime Minister would not tolerate were Lee's persistent, brutal, and increasingly public personal attacks on Savage, Nash or anyone else who dared to disagree with Lee or whom Lee saw as thwarting his ambition. Lee himself recognised that 'I have few friends. I can count them on the fingers of my hand. Why—is it egotism or sensitiveness that erects barriers or the possession of distasteful qualities?' Even those few 'friends I should sincerely like to kick on occasion for the good of their soul. I could chastise them with all the vigour and fury of a brother.'[36] Savage was certainly not going to allow himself to be chastised by Lee without retaliating.

McMillan, Nordmeyer and Barnard were probably more effective leaders of the dissident group in caucus, although Lee always thought

of himself and acted as the faction's leader, organiser and spokesman. Certainly McMillan and Nordmeyer had reservations about their mercurial ally,[37] and one of Lee's most loyal admirers, Williams, decided in retrospect that 'caucus would never have voted for Lee as Prime Minister. It was one thing to vote for a motion moved by Lee on a matter of policy, and quite another to give an absolute vote of confidence in the man' who 'was not a good team-worker' and 'in caucus . . . would, as often as not, follow a course of his own quite ignoring the opinions of his colleagues.'[38] In time, when he became leader of the Democratic Labour Party, Lee's xenophobia, jingoism, anti-Catholicism, authoritarian and intolerant personality cult, and insistence on making all the decisions on his own while crushing all divergent opinions, systematically alienated nearly all his closest supporters and led Williams to tell Lee bluntly that he was a 'mad dog biting everyone but me.'[39]

In December 1938, following the first disappointing caucus meeting, Lee had written a number of abusive letters to Savage and Nash and circulated a more general ten-page letter to all Labour MPs.[40] In what became known as the 'Lee letter', Lee expressed his alarm at the 'indecision, vacillation and drift which is apparent within the Party'. Despite warnings from Nordmeyer, he then launched a vitriolic personal attack on Nash, to whom Lee was still under-secretary. The letter summarised the history of the caucus disputes over the previous three years and criticised severely and specifically the government's financial and economic policies since 1936. Somewhat surprisingly, Lee argued that Savage himself should have taken the finance portfolio in 1935. Instead he had appointed Nash and through 'the mistaken assumption of loyalty to Cabinet' had chosen to become 'responsible for his colleague instead of for his own opinions.' Nash had been wrong in everything and was always two or three years too late in reluctantly doing anything worthwhile. As a result, Lee concluded, 'I have no confidence in Mr Nash's handling of any financial problem, I never had. Mr Nash knows I have not, the Prime Minister knows I have not, for I have not concealed my opinion.'[41]

Until that time the battles in Labour's caucus had been fought in private behind an apparently united front presented to the National Opposition and the public. In March 1939, after their defeat at the February caucus and possibly in an attempt to influence the forthcoming Labour Party conference, Lee's then ally Lyon circulated the letter outside the caucus and it was published in *Smith's Weekly*. Labour's opponents fell on the letter with glee and thereafter it was used inside and outside Parliament by the National Party to embarrass Savage and Nash and to substantiate charges that Labour was a divided government with an incompetent Minister of Finance whom even Labour MPs could no longer support.[42] In retrospect, Lee had to admit that some of his actions and statements over these and subsequent years 'helped to create an anti-Labour ferment, although they were designed to create a pro-radical

ferment. [Sidney] Holland was the profiteer of my activity.'[43]

The damage he might be doing did not at the time, however, worry Lee. He took the view that, 'when we write we express ourselves freely, shatter idols with a disregard for the hurt we impose' in order to 'remould things nearer to the heart's desire'.[44] He, therefore, further publicised the dispute. In the 1 and 29 March 1939 issues of the journal *Tomorrow*, two anonymous detailed accounts of the November 1938 caucus appeared with the strong and erroneous implication that Savage had opposed any increase in pensions. At least one of the accounts, 'Retreat Begets Retreat', was written by Lee. Despite its concern, the Labour Party's executive decided to delay action until the conference, which opened in Wellington Monday 10 April 1939.[45]

Many journalists and party activists saw the conflict in simple terms. Labour would remain united only 'so long as Rt. Hon. M. J. Savage remains in office as Prime Minister' because no other Labour politician exerts such 'a remarkable personal magnetism over the rank and file of the Labour Party'.[46]

Jim Roberts, the party's president, opened the conference and praised the government's achievements during its first three years in office. Then Savage, who had been cheered by a rapturous standing reception, presented his report to the more than 1000 delegates and observers.[47] It was a wide-ranging address, starting with a summary of the 1938 election results; then discussing the government's long-range and short-term plans and the extent to which they had been carried out since 1935; then emphasising the necessity of New Zealand becoming an economy less dependent on overseas markets through the expansion of protected domestic industry and the diversification of the country's economic base; and drawing attention to the fact that defence expenditure had trebled over the previous three years. The word 'security' appeared again and again, fifteen times in the opening paragraphs of the address alone. Savage warned the delegates that the real test of his government's ability and strength was only beginning. Although Labour had 'laid the foundations' for a less dependent economy through the 'policies of guaranteed incomes, of regulated marketing, of credit and currency control, of expansion of our own manufacturing industries, of maintenance of purchasing power and the redistribution of national income', much of that had been made possible only because of the fortuitous recovery of export prices. 'Now that export prices have receded, particularly in wool,' Savage observed, 'the true test of Labour's policy is at hand.'[48]

Finally, Savage addressed his remarks directly to the dispute in caucus.[49] He admitted that, while there were a thousand and one opinions on what the government should be doing, in what order, and at what speed, the disagreement was primarily between 'those who say we have gone too far and too fast and others who say not far enough and not quickly enough.' Savage was in the middle. He claimed that 'within

the dictates of commonsense', the Labour Government had attempted with considerable success to apply its principles and implement its policies. However, 'to move rashly' risked 'upsetting the sound economic and social structure we are erecting' and could also 'endanger the movement to which so many years of your efforts and mine have been devoted'. After 'dispassionately at first' outlining the situation that had developed in caucus, Savage became more emotional and 'his voice and demeanour indicated that he felt his position keenly. "I don't want people to tell me how much they love me, and then find they are holding meetings behind my back." '[50] As Savage sat down, the conference erupted in another tumultuous ovation.

Roberts then moved and the seamen's union leader, Fintan Patrick Walsh, seconded a motion of confidence in Savage and the endorsement of a mechanism whereby in future all major deadlocks in caucus should be resolved by the leader, after consulting the national executive or, if practicable, conference. The passage of such a motion would have clearly strengthened Savage's hand. Lyon and McMillan, therefore, moved the deletion of all the words in the motion after the formal expression of confidence. Although Lee's supporters had been, in Lee's own words, 'campaigning to capture Conference' since the beginning of the year,[51] Lee himself recognised that Savage had the support of an overwhelming majority of the delegates.[52] He spoke only half-heartedly in support of the amendment, which was easily defeated. Roberts' motion was then carried by a large majority, in the vicinity of 5–1, on a show of hands and amid loud acclamation.[53] Savage now clearly had the support of the party conference as well as the national executive in having the final say on the composition of his cabinet, although it was equally clearly assumed that he would take into account the views of caucus.

The question of Lee's letter and the *Tomorrow* articles still remained. Early on the Tuesday afternoon, conference carried with only three dissentients a motion expressing confidence in Nash as Minister of Finance and in the financial policy of the government, after Nash had addressed the conference and Lee had again contained himself and somewhat surprisingly and certainly hypocritically had expressed his general support for Nash while criticising his reluctance to apply exchange control. There the matter might have rested had the Auckland union leader and longtime party activist Jim Purtell, whom Savage had met privately in his office that morning, not moved a further motion condemning Lee's actions. The resolution demanded that in future no Labour MP should issue statements openly opposing the government's policy unless they had first received permission from the national executive.[54]

Because the executive, at a meeting a week before, had decided to do everything possible to prevent an acrimonious debate on the Lee letter at conference,[55] Fraser attempted to defuse the situation by moving an amendment. He asked conference to direct the executive to conduct an

inquiry and if necessary to act to prevent any recurrence. Conference adjourned for the day without voting on either Purtell's motion or Fraser's amendment.

During Tuesday night, Lee's supporters met to discuss tactics for the following day and busily lobbied delegates, giving them a detailed and partisan explanation of what had been happening in caucus.[56] When the conference resumed at 10 o'clock on Wednesday morning, Roberts from the chair immediately attacked those who had divulged the business of conference to the Christchurch *Press* and then criticised Lyon for reading to a meeting of delegates the Lee letter and discussing with them the caucus dispute. Savage's friend and ardent supporter Wilson, who at the conference was re-elected secretary-treasurer of the party by 616 votes to 135, moved that Lyon be condemned by conference for his actions. Purtell and J. T. Casely, who represented Savage's Auckland West Branch, moved an amendment to suspend the MP for the remainder of conference. That amendment was lost on a show of hands and Wilson's motion carried 330–157.

After censuring Lyon, conference returned to the debate over Lee's letter. Fraser, angered by the activities of Lee and his allies overnight, withdrew his amendment and moved instead a motion condemning Lee 'in the strongest terms' and calling on the incoming executive 'to take whatever action it deems to be appropriate in the circumstances' and 'to report to next Conference'. Purtell withdrew his motion in favour of Fraser's. After the Lee letter was read to conference, Fraser, Nash, Parry and Wilson spoke in favour of condemning Lee, who with McMillan, Nordmeyer and Williams opposed it. The conference did not adjourn for tea but decided that Lee, Nash and Savage would speak and then a vote would be taken. Lee and Nash each spoke for about an hour.

Lee, somewhat ironically representing the Auckland Brewery Workers' Union, whose secretary at that time was Lee's devoted electorate organiser, Norman Douglas, defended himself vigorously and opposed what he regarded as unacceptable censorship. In contrast to his earlier moderation, he now used all his oratorical skill to accuse Nash of having, through his incompetence, brought New Zealand 'to the brink of financial disaster' and went on to attack Savage for having set up the inter-party Committee on Social Security in 1938.[57] Robust, scheming, flamboyant, arrogant, arguably with Semple the most entertaining and scorching demagogue in the party at that time, a man who smote his opponents as well as their arguments, Lee clearly had the better of Nash, a milder personality and a rather pedestrian speaker. Lee's sympathisers sensed that the debate was swinging Lee's way[58] and the press also commented that the 'fate of the Government hung in the balance.'[59]

Finally, it was the turn of the party's other charismatic propagandist. The hall was hushed as Savage rose to his feet. Many shocked delegates expected Savage to play the role of conciliator and elder statesman and

try to moderate the rift that had been revealed so starkly between Lee and Nash, personifying as they did the most impatient and conservative wings of the party. Intead, Savage uncompromisingly condemned Lee for writing and issuing the Lee letter. A Lee supporter recalled,

> The Prime Minister came forward. He had evidently waited until the last moment so as to have the greatest possible effect. His voice was like the growl of an angry bear. Certainly the exact sense of what he said and almost the exact words were: 'You can't do without me and you know it. . . . You have got to vote for the censure'.[60]

Savage knew his value as an unrivalled political asset to the party and was prepared to place his leadership on the line in defence of his cabinet colleagues and their policies. Lee and his allies had to be shown who had the support of the party. The earlier votes of confidence in himself and Nash needed to be underlined by the censuring of Lee. Fraser's motion was carried 285–207.

The margin was not as decisive as Savage had hoped and might have been much closer without his clear threat to resign. That night conference further confused the situation by electing Lee to the executive. Although Wilson claimed that 'the "Lee" incident may now be considered definitely closed'[61], it was clear that the rift had not been finally resolved or unity and discipline within caucus restored. The secretary could claim with more justification that conference had 'definitely strengthened the hands of the Prime Minister and the National Executive'. But by also telling all branches and affiliations that conference itself would resolve any further disputes, Wilson foreshadowed that the 1940 conference might well become an even more hotly contested battleground than the 1939 conference.

Savage closed the 1939 conference with a heartfelt appeal to the party to 'see to it that the elements of destruction are not generated within our own ranks'.[62] Lee, Lyon and Barnard, however, had already signalled their intention of continuing to oppose and irritate Savage by presenting to conference a minority report on defence, demanding 'an affirmation by the Conference and the Prime Minister that it is the duty of every fit man to offer himself for voluntary training for the defence of New Zealand.'[63] Savage, an opponent of militarism and conscription and a defender of the conscientious objector, was put in an embarrassing position, especially as the minority report was adopted.

Lee certainly started to organise his counter-attack immediately, recording in his diary that 'The old gang will never dominate another Conference. . . . Delegates go away saying Lee is the coming man. . . . Savage's voice belonged to an old tired man looking into the grave. . . . He lacks guts. The knife rusts while he holds it poised.'[64] Ignoring the fact that conference had endorsed Savage and Nash and, whatever the circumstances and the size of the majority, had censured him, Lee, as soon as conference concluded, arranged for the formal publication and distribution of the Lee letter. He also started to organise meetings

throughout the country to establish a majority among delegates to the next conference. Lee believed that he had a year in which to capture the leadership of the Labour Party and openly claimed that he was now the alternative to Savage.[65] In spearheading the attack against Savage, Fraser and Nash, however, he recognised that he ran the risk of becoming either 'the first casualty or the first officer'.[66] The major problem was how to remove Savage, and Lee decided as early as June 1939 that it was 'Time for a leaflet on old humbug. It almost becomes necessary to slay the old fool to allow new growth.'[67]

Savage had other things on his mind beside Lee's enmity and machinations. Although the Social Security Act officially came into operation on 1 April 1939, throughout the early part of that year the British Medical Association led by Jamieson continued to resist the implementation of parts of the scheme. Fraser, as Minister of Health, Nash and McMillan met the doctors' representatives on a number of occasions but progress towards agreement was slow, especially in regard to maternity services. The doctors wanted to be able to charge additional fees for their services over and above the state's contribution, and a deadlock developed between the government and the doctors over that issue. Only twenty-five out of 900 doctors accepted the contract for maternity care offered by the government in April.[68]

McMillan, who continued to press forcefully, indeed abrasively, for a universal, free health system, was detested by his medical colleagues. Fraser, on the other hand, was liked and admired, partly because Jamieson had a high regard for his ability and partly because Fraser tended to defer to the medical profession and had initially agreed to a mixed system of private and public health care.[69] Although Fraser continued to negotiate cautiously and diplomatically with the doctors, Savage finally lost patience and intervened personally in the negotiations.

On 29 May 1939 Fraser, McMillan and a deputation of doctors led by Jamieson and Dr Duncan Stout met Savage in Fraser's office. The discussion lasted for nearly two hours.[70] The angry Prime Minister told the doctors bluntly that as far as he was concerned the people had endorsed the Social Security Act at the 1938 election and that the law would be upheld and implemented. Jamieson, who had nothing but contempt for Savage, whom he regarded as a pathetic figure unwilling to see the justice of the doctors' independent professional position, replied that 'The fact that it is a law and the fact that the people, as you believe, have agreed to it does not make it right'.[71] He argued that the law was a mistake and that the doctors would not work under it. They were free professionals who would set their own fees and judge the worth of their own services. The minority of patients who were too poor to pay could perhaps receive maternity care at the lower official rate.

Jamieson's intransigent arrogance incensed the equally adamant Prime Minister and the debate between the two men became heated. Savage

declared that no section of New Zealand society was going to dictate to the government and the people it represented. A waterside worker who refused to provide a service unless he received everything he demanded 'would be locked out' and the government would treat doctors on strike the way unionists had so often been treated in the past. The government would not surrender to the doctors' pressure, although it was prepared to provide everything by way of fees and conditions that were reasonable. If there were mistakes and weaknesses in the scheme, they could be remedied once the social security system was operating. The one matter, Savage said, that was not negotiable was the universality of the maternity scheme. All patients were to be treated equally and he did not believe that would happen if doctors retained the right to divide their patients into rich and poor and charge accordingly. Savage argued,

> It is really a matter of providing reasonable service for all sections of the community. People should have some claim on the medical profession without feeling any humiliation. I have spent the best years of my life in trying to remove that humiliation. That is one of the things that makes life worthwhile. Now we are told that whatever happens the medical profession will still serve the poor sections of the community and charge the other section whatever they like. . . . If I get the same service as the man next door I want to pay the same price as the man next door.[72]

The doctors asked Savage if he realised what their independence meant to them and if he could not trust the profession. Savage replied that it was not a question of trust but 'a question of guaranteeing to every man, woman and child a medical service'.[73] He ended the meeting with a clear and specific threat that if the government had to recruit doctors from overseas, especially from among the large number of German and Austrian Jewish refugee doctors seeking to enter the country, in order to break a medical strike then the government was prepared to do so.

> Let us be quite frank. We are not going to do any more waiting. We have done too much waiting already. This Act was to come into operation on the 1st April. We are a long way past the 1st April. We are not waiting any longer. If the Medical profession show some desire to meet us that makes all the difference. To be quite frank I do not see much evidence of that. If we can do nothing by Saturday morning well then there will be a show down.[74]

Having delivered his forty-eight-hour ultimatum, Savage strode from the room, leaving behind an apoplectic Jamieson and a subdued Fraser.

The agreement took a little longer than forty-eight hours but within a fortnight the doctors decided to accept a fixed payment from the Social Security Fund for maternity services, only specialists in obstetrics being entitled to charge additional amounts. By early September the negotiations on maternity care were concluded. The introduction of general practitioner benefits continued to be a subject of negotiation and conflict until after Savage's death ten months later. It was left to a new Minister of Health,

Nordmeyer, to implement in 1941 a fee for service scheme, which gave the New Zealand public the free general doctor service the 1938 Social Security Act had promised. That scheme, although universal, was in practice, as a result of the continued resistance of the doctors and the intervention of Fraser, by then Prime Minister, considerably diluted from its original form. The payment to doctors became an ever diminishing subsidy rather than the free doctor's service Savage and McMillan had envisaged.[75]

Savage was concerned during early 1939 not only with the split in the party and the delay in introducing social security but also with a growing economic crisis. The reduced demand for imports during the Depression had been largely responsible for New Zealand building up a substantial reserve of overseas funds, some £38 million when Labour took office in December 1935.[76] Three years of general prosperity, with considerable over-importing largely generated by Labour's expansionist policies, considerably reduced those assets. By December 1938 the country had less than £7 million in overseas funds, a drop of some £13 million in the previous three months.[77] The decline in the sterling balances was accompanied by a continued rise in imports, which virtually extinguished the surplus in New Zealand's trade balance. Currency speculation further worsened the situation, encouraging the flight of capital abroad and making overseas bankers reluctant to lend to New Zealand. The National Party Opposition and some of the government's more conservative economic advisers, such as Ashwin of Treasury and Lefeaux of the Reserve Bank, argued that, as the country was clearly not living within its income, government expenditure had to be reduced even if that meant economic recession, increased unemployment and the halting of Labour's social security scheme.

The government did not act immediately it became aware of the crisis early in 1938 because of the election later in that year. As Nash's biographer succinctly observed, 'The introduction of Social Security had been postponed to win votes; exchange controls so as not to lose them.'[78] With the election out of the way, imports could be reduced selectively through exchange and import controls. Savage wrote to one of his nieces in December 1938,

> Just at the moment we are up to our necks in controlling our overseas trade and no doubt you will be told in Australian papers that we are steering for red ruin. Our reply is that we are also in the throes of record trade so far as shopkeepers are concerned; and everyone is happy as a result. . . . This political business is not altogether a garden of roses.[79]

Although the post-election caucus accepted the necessity of exchange control, Nash, who had a widely and justifiably held reputation for procrastination and who was certainly worried by the more conservative views of his advisers, delayed acting until Savage intervened personally. A government nominee on the Reserve Bank, Mark Silverstone, a Dunedin

Labour Party founder, tried unsuccessfully to see Nash to express his concern at the run on New Zealand's sterling reserves. Finally, in desperation, he sought and obtained an interview with Savage. Nash was ordered by Savage to put aside all other commitments and join Savage and Silverstone in the Prime Minister's office.[80] Exchange controls were introduced within the next day or two.

The exchange and import controls were defended by Savage not only as necessary to conserve overseas funds but also as part of a longer-term strategy to insulate New Zealand's dependent economy and to encourage industrial development and full employment.[81] The welfare state could not be constructed by sharing poverty. An increase in production and a high level of productivity were necessary to produce sufficient wealth to meet people's needs. The goods and services had to exist before they could be distributed equitably. That required also an economy as self-contained as possible, with the dependency of the economy to markets and influences outside New Zealand's control reduced to a minimum.

In March 1939 Savage visited a number of factories in Wellington and Auckland, advocating that New Zealand 'should learn . . . to walk on its own feet' industrially because in any future war the country could become isolated. Not only would industrialisation help make New Zealand more self-sufficient in manufactured goods it would also create jobs, it was hoped, for at least four times the country's current population so that urgent, large-scale immigration could be encouraged to give New Zealand the population necessary to 'hold a practically empty territory' in the event of invasion.[82] He also criticised those who believed that currency reform was in itself 'the short cut to the millenium', ignoring the 'thousand and one things involved' in creating and distributing wealth.[83]

Allowing for the fact that he was by that time rather cautious in his support of monetary reform, Savage's speeches still clearly reflected sympathy more for the economic views of the caucus dissidents than with Nash's relatively orthodox approach. But on one major matter Savage and Nash were agreed: the New Zealand economy and the social security for which the economy provided the substructure could not survive without the successful renegotiation of overseas loans falling due for repayment. No country with large overseas obligations could continue to expand its domestic credit and purchasing power faster than its real productivity. A high level of imports could not be sustained and overseas loans serviced simply by raising domestic purchasing power through the creation of credit.

When New Zealand imposed import controls, Malcolm MacDonald, the British Secretary of State for the Dominions, immediately informed Savage through Jordan that the British would retaliate against New Zealand unless it curtailed its 'expensive social services' and cut its public works programmes.[84] Jordan also warned Savage that the injudicious utterances of some members of the Labour caucus about British investment in New

Zealand might well make the renegotiation of loans more difficult and costly. Lee, who thought that the government had introduced currency and import controls far too late and then for the wrong reason, could not be silenced. His subsequent suggestion that, because some people were manipulating finance against New Zealand, he would not hesitate to repudiate New Zealand's overseas debt was all the more embarrassing because of the perception in some circles that Lee might succeed Savage as Prime Minister.[85]

By early 1939 a campaign by British bankers, industrialists, economists and some politicians was being waged against New Zealand over its import controls in particular and the Labour Government's unorthodox economic policies in general. Jordan, who had been forced to threaten the BBC that he would make a statement to the world's press that 'the BBC could not be relied upon in statements made' in order to get the right of reply to New Zealand's critics,[86] informed Savage in April 1939 that the deputy governor of the Bank of England had said that the possibility of New Zealand raising loans even at a high interest rate 'was right out of the question'.[87] On Monday 1 May, with the situation deteriorating further, Nash sailed for London.

Savage took over as Acting Minister of Finance and thereafter, as his diary indicated, his workload increased dramatically. Every day Savage had meetings with various ministers, seeking approval for expenditure, and with Ashwin and Lefeaux as well as his own advisers and departmental head. Because of the steady drift towards war in Europe, the Prime Minister found himself inundated with foreign affairs and defence matters. Fraser and McMillan continued to report on the implementation of the social security scheme. Nash kept in constant contact over the negotiations in England. And at the end of May and in early June Savage spent four days campaigning in the Christchurch South by-election caused by the death of Howard. On one night he addressed 2800 people at four meetings in different parts of the electorate and was described by the local evening paper as being 'in good fighting form'.[88] A crowd of 2000 people farewelled him at the Christchurch railway station on his return to Wellington. The three months of May, June and July 1939 constituted one of the busiest periods of Savage's life.

Inevitably, the pressure and the worry told on Savage's ailing body. But because he believed that 'a critical situation is rapidly developing'[89] and that British financial circles might be frightened by the prospect of any change of leadership in the New Zealand Government, Savage continued to postpone his operation and continued to hold both his own and Nash's portfolios.

Nash was finding little sympathy in Britain for New Zealand's predicament and after a number of unpleasant meetings at first cabled Savage that 'the general view was that it would be next to impossible to raise new loans in London in present circumstances'.[90] However, after

weeks of difficult negotiations, the British suggested a short-term loan of £16,000,000, repayable at £4,000,000 per year as a first charge against New Zealand's export receipts. The New Zealand Government was also to abandon its import controls as soon as possible and refrain from industrialising. Nash conveyed the terms to Savage in a cable on 1 July 1939.[91]

Savage, who in Lee's words had been 'getting hell, what with MPs and London cables',[92] had suddenly become ill again on Tuesday 27 June, the day the new parliamentary session commenced. He had missed the Governor General's speech from the throne and had spent the following six days at home in bed with what the newspapers speculated was merely influenza.[93] On Monday 3 July, however, after the receipt of Nash's cable containing the British loan proposals, Savage returned to his office. He chaired cabinet meetings at 10.30 and 2.30 and then in a cable informed Nash that New Zealand could repay £2,000,000 but not £4,000,000 each year and would have to convert the balance into a long-term loan after four years. New Zealand might also have to cancel some uncompleted defence orders. While Nash 'could generally agree we will not foster uneconomic industries', any decision on what was uneconomic 'must definitely rest with New Zealand Government.'[94] Cabinet continued to meet under Savage's chairmanship almost daily throughout the following three weeks.[95] The Prime Minister was kept informed of the ongoing negotiations in Britain by phone and by daily and lengthy cables from Nash, who appeared understandably unwilling to agree to anything without the prior approval of Savage and his cabinet colleagues.[96] Savage also frequently discussed the crisis with Sullivan, Ashwin, Lefeaux and the British High Commissioner, Sir Harry Batterbee.

After further hard negotiations in Britain it was proposed that the £16,000,000 would be repaid over five years at £3,200,000 per year paid monthly into a special account direct from New Zealand's export receipts.[97] Savage was furious. He told Nash that he found the terms 'intolerable', 'objectionable', 'unnecessary and humiliating', likely to lead to a huge reduction in imports, the disorganisation of the New Zealand economy, and widespread unemployment and hardship.[98] With the help of the British Prime Minister, Chamberlain, and the governor of the Bank of England, Montague Norman, a loan was finally arranged and the terms slightly amended, though New Zealand was still humiliated. The loan was to be repaid in five onerous annual instalments instead of monthly. Throughout July Nash continued negotiating the final details.

Savage clearly wanted Nash to return to New Zealand, preferably by air, as soon as possible and relieve him of the finance portfolio. He cabled Nash to that effect on 26 June. Nash replied that the serious problems needing to be resolved in Britain regarding the loans would prevent his returning before August. Savage reluctantly told Nash to stay on until the negotiations were completed satisfactorily.[99] The Prime Minister

would prepare and present the 1939 Budget himself.

On Wednesday 26 July, two days after chairing a long and difficult cabinet meeting in the absence of his lieutenants Fraser and Nash, the Prime Minister, tired, frail and in considerable pain, returned to his bed. Savage's doctors told him that there was now no possibility of waiting further for Nash's return. He agreed to have the operation as soon as he had presented the Budget the following week. He spent the next few days working at home finalising the document after cabling Nash asking for details of the loan for inclusion in the Budget.[100] Despite medical advice, Savage insisted on reading the Budget in the House on Tuesday evening, 1 August.[101] With Fraser sitting anxiously beside him, worried that the Prime Minister might collapse, Savage spoke for an hour and twenty-five minutes. Although his voice was firm and clear, Savage frequently wiped perspiration from his forehead.

In the Budget, which was commented on by critics largely because it increased the tax on beer and petrol, Savage surveyed his government's achievements since 1935. A programme of public works had rapidly increased purchasing power, which in turn had led to an expansion of demand, industry and employment. Unfortunately, domestic production had not increased sufficiently to match the increase in purchasing power, which had been satisfied by an excessive growth in imports, draining New Zealand's sterling reserves. He outlined the measures that would have to be taken to remedy the situation. Lee, sitting listening, found little to record in his diary about the Budget except how, during the subsequent budget debate, he intended to attack Nash.[102]

The effort of reading the Budget was, as his doctors and Fraser feared, too much for Savage. The next day he suffered a relapse and on Thursday 3 August, as previously arranged, entered Wellington's Lewisham Hospital, run by nuns from the Little Company of Mary. On Friday at 10.30 a.m., almost a year after first being advised to have the operation, Savage was operated on. He gave instructions that as soon as the operation was completed a telegram was to be sent to Aruba in Auckland.[103] He remained until 26 August in the hospital, where his close friend Webb was also receiving treatment for an eye complaint that eventually was to prove to be cancer, necessitating some years later the removal of the eye and subsequently leading to Webb's death.[104]

After the operation, performed by Gordon Anderson, Savage's physician, J. Roberts Boyd, announced that the Prime Minister had undergone 'a serious abdominal operation on account of an obstruction which has now been removed.'[105] Savage rallied quickly after the operation and cabled Nash that he was 'getting along splendidly'.[106] Fraser's periodic reports to Nash were more subdued[107] and Dr McMillan told his fellow dissidents that, 'the recovery is too rapid, it is evident that there has been no major operation, they just opened him up, saw the case is hopeless, and sewed him up again, he hasn't very many months

to live.'[108] Savage left the hospital and returned to his new prime ministerial residence, a large house at 66 Harbour View Road, high up on the heights of Wellington overlooking the harbour. During the next week numerous visitors called: Fagan, Wilson, Cornish, Hodgens, Webb, Lofty Blomfield, Fraser, Berendsen and Nash, who had finally returned via the United States to New Zealand on 5 September, the day after the New Zealand Government had declared the country to be at war with Germany.

A quiet moment in the garden. *NZLP*

" IF THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION WITHHOLDS ITS CO-OPERATION, THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER TAKING OTHER STEPS "
- THE PRIME MINISTER
NEXT, PLEASE!
CASTOR OIL
CASCARA
Dr SAVAGE, B.M.A. (FAILED)
SOCIAL SERVICE STATION
40 HRS 40 A WEEK
COUGH DROPS
No 9

THE MEDICINE MAN.

Savage was determined that the Social Security Act would be implemented even if the doctors opposed it. *Sir Gordon Minhinnick and NZ Herald*

Chatting with Alf and Elizabeth French at home. The photo over the mantlepiece is of Savage. *NZLP*

Radio broadcasting was one of Savage's major interests and as a politician he made very effective use of the new medium of communication. *Auckland Star*

Savage leaving hospital accompanied by Webb (left) and Fagan. *NZ Free Lance*

An informal photo of Savage sitting in a chair in his Northland, Wellington, home after leaving hospital. *Mrs Aruba Alfrey*

XIII
'DOWN TO THE GRAVE'
1939–40

AT THE END of September 1938 the British Prime Minister, Chamberlain, had met Hitler at Munich. He returned to London to announce that he had achieved 'peace in our time'. The cost was the dismembering of Czechoslovakia, which Britain and France had earlier pledged to support. Jordan told Savage that the British and French Governments were more concerned with combatting the spread of communism, and even socialism, in Europe than they were with opposing Hitler and fascism and that, in his opinion, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland would all become part of an anti-Soviet alliance in central Europe.[1]

Although Munich was clearly a setback to collective security and to the League of Nations, the British Minister for the Dominions, Malcolm MacDonald, asked the Dominion High Commissioners to send cables to Chamberlain congratulating him on the settlement and for maintaining peace. The Australian and Canadian High Commissions complied immediately, as did John Curtin, the Leader of the Australian Labour Party Opposition.[2] New Zealand refused, on the grounds that its policy was different.[3]

The British Government declared that it would not appease Hitler again, but on 25 January 1939 told New Zealand that it feared that the Germans were 'considering an attack on Western Powers as a preliminary to subsequent action in the east.'[4] Savage and his government, thereafter, became increasingly anxious about the deteriorating international situation and also became more cautious in openly criticising the British.[5] Jordan, however, did not believe that Britain would go to war, even if Germany or its allies acted aggressively again[6] and his opinion appeared to be confirmed when, in April, the British refused to offer even moral assistance to Albania in resisting an Italian invasion.

New Zealand complained that the British 'were prepared to discuss matters with Germany and Italy, or any other nation excepting Russia', with which it believed Germany would inevitably go to war.[7] Privately, Savage and his government continued to press the British to secure Soviet assistance in opposing Hitler.[8]

Savage's public statements on foreign affairs and defence, notably his repeated comment that 'When Britain is in trouble we are in trouble. . . . New Zealand would be found where-ever Britain was when Britain was in trouble',[9] began to receive support from the National Party Opposition. National's general secretary, D. W. McClurg, suggested that Savage should be congratulated because 'defence was above party matters'.[10] There were, however, qualifications to Savage's assurances to Britain.

In April 1939, in the same week that Savage was engaged in his struggle with Lee at the Labour Party conference, a defence conference with representation from New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom met in Wellington to examine precisely and bluntly the strategic situation in the Pacific. Despite his expression of general support for Britain, Savage refused to give specific details of New Zealand's military commitment in the event of war, stating that 'It was like starting to play a football match; the captain could not say where he was going to have his men definitely until certain things happened.'[11]

Savage still hoped, even at that late stage, that peace might be maintained because, 'It makes one shudder to think of what the result of another war would be when so much remains to be done for the benefit of the mass of the people'.[12] At the Imperial Conference two years before, he had tried unsuccessfully to persuade his fellow leaders of the British Empire that the causes of war were essentially economic and that it would be a good idea to have an international conference to discuss and, hopefully, to start to remove those causes, prominent among which were inadequate and unjust trading arrangements. Throughout the early part of 1939 Savage reiterated his call for a world conference on peace and the international economy, a call endorsed by many of New Zealand's church leaders.[13] The Prime Minister argued that the wrong kinds of international meetings were being held.

> To hold a conference to discuss what should be the size of cruisers and the calibre of the guns, whether they should be 16 in. or 14 in., seemed to him a curious gesture. I would far sooner see the same people discussing the economic problems of the world. A country did not go to war for the love of it, there were always economic problems as the cause.[14]

Britain and the United States should convene such a conference because, 'if New Zealand did take the initiative most of the other nations would have to look at the map to find out where New Zealand was.'[15] The larger powers did not take Savage's pleas seriously and in June 1939 he was still a lone voice calling in vain for a world conference 'before war

begins rather than after it ends.'[16]

All Savage's fears, hopes and speculation ended with the signing of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact of 23 August 1939 and their invasion and occupation of Poland. On 28 August New Zealand approved the British ultimatum to Hitler and just before midnight on 3 September 1939 the New Zealand Cabinet formally declared war on Germany.

When Fraser, as Acting Prime Minister, announced the declaration of war to a hushed Parliament,[17] Savage was not present. Sick, tired, conscious of his age, Savage, who had only been home from hospital a week, exhibited no desire to be leader of a nation at war. Nevertheless, two days later from his bed he broadcast to the nation, expressing his regret that the war should interrupt and endanger all that the Labour Government had tried to do to improve people's lives. The time, however, had come 'to overthrow the evil forces of aggression' so,

> With gratitude for the past and confidence in the future we range ourselves without fear beside Britain. Where she goes, we go; where she stands, we stand. We are only a small and young nation, but we march with a union of hearts and souls to a common destiny.[18]

While privately pressing the British Government to define clearly and publicise its war aims, and if necessary hold a conference of Allied leaders to discuss what precisely the war was meant to achieve,[19] Savage's Government decided to send the 1st Echelon of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force to Britain's aid as soon as possible. That move embarrassed the Australians, who, although much more vocal in their support of British policy prior to the outbreak of war, were much more reluctant than New Zealand to commit their forces outside the Pacific while Japan's intentions were still unclear.[20]

Since late 1937 the government had been campaigning to recruit volunteers into the small regular armed forces and a larger territorial reserve. At first Savage hoped, rather optimistically, that it would be possible to create a citizen 'home defence force of at least 50 000 men'.[21] The young men of New Zealand responded with little enthusiasm. Within a short time the target was reduced to 15 000 and eventually some 6000 territorial volunteers joined the 11 000 already in the armed forces. The National Party, the Returned Soldiers' Association, the Farmers' Union, and the Defence League, formed in late 1936, started to press for compulsory military training with the clear indication that, in the now likely event of war, there would be conscription.

Throughout his life Savage had opposed conscription. As he stated shortly after becoming Prime Minister, it should be possible, if the cause was just, to encourage men to fight for what was right and to give them the proper facilities and resources to defend themselves and to care for their families in their absence.[22] Although Savage admitted that conscription might be forced on the country in wartime, he hoped that there would not be 'one conscript' and he promised that there would be no

repetition of the 1914–18 war when, 'while men were dying, other people were getting rich.'[23] No-one could say categorically what might be necessary if the nation was 'fighting for its life', but if conscription of 'human flesh and blood' ever again became a necessity, then wealth would be conscripted first to see that soldiers and their families were provided for adequately and their children not saddled with the burden of war debt. He also distrusted the militarisation of New Zealand society and, according to Lee, on at least one occasion told caucus that, although it was his duty to encourage recruiting, he feared that 'every man in uniform is a potential recruit for a fascist army'.[24]

With the outbreak of war, although personally repelled by the idea of asking young New Zealanders to fight and possibly to die in foreign countries, Savage reluctantly spearheaded an effective campaign to recruit volunteers through a series of broadcasts, press interviews, and his pamphlet *A Clarion Call to New Zealand*. His was no jingoistic and militaristic appeal. He apologised for having to ask men to join the forces and to fight to defend their homeland and democracy. He could think of no less congenial task for 'a man who is already past military age, and has himself never been on active service. . . . If, without shirking my duty, I could escape the task I would gladly do so'.[25] However, New Zealand was at war because there was 'no honourable alternative' and all New Zealanders had to forget 'what might have been' and face up to 'what is'. The more bellicose and patriotic phrases in his recruiting speeches were put there by his speechwriters and, on at least one occasion, Savage's deputy, Fraser, who had gone to prison for opposing conscription in World War I but who was to introduce it with alacrity after Savage's death, had to persuade Savage to give unaltered a recruiting address, written by Cornish, that Savage considered was excessively jingoistic in tone. Nevertheless, Savage argued with conviction that New Zealand had to ally itself with Britain because New Zealand's remoteness was only of value if the battle overseas went in Britain's favour. Otherwise, weak and alone, New Zealand would simply be occupied after its allies' defeat.[26]

Many individuals and organisations wrote to Savage expressing their views on the prospect of conscription.[27] Some unions, trades councils, LRCs, Labour Party branches and various individuals opposed any such suggestion. The Douglas Social Credit Movement rejected conscription and was to continue to sympathise with conscientious objectors throughout the war.[28] Clergymen also raised the matter with the Prime Minister, and one of Savage's acquaintances and constituents, the Rev. J. John of St John's Church in Ponsonby, recorded that,

> On two occasions, once in 1938 and again in 1939 after the outbreak of war, I discussed at length with him his own personal attitude to war, to conscription and to general international problems. I found him to be a man of peace and goodwill and he assured me that as long as he was the head of the Government there was not the slightest possibility

> of anything in the nature of conscription or compulsory service being introduced. Indeed he stated as his own personal view that it was not the intention of the Government to act in such a way.[29]

Numerous other correspondents, however, supported conscription, including the Napier branch of the Labour Party and the Pahiatua LRC, who argued for the concurrent conscription of manpower and wealth.[30]

Despite his public and private opposition to conscription, Savage appears to have never completely excluded the possibility. In replying to McMillan, who had expressed concern that the government might try to justify conscription of men by concurrently conscripting wealth, Savage wrote,

> Some 12 months ago in replying to a deputation I said that if ever conscription came in New Zealand it would not begin with flesh and blood and that no one could say what a nation may have to do when it had its back to the wall fighting for its life. That is my opinion still. I also think that conscription should not be considered until adopted by conference.[31]

Although, while Savage was still Prime Minister, the executives of both the Labour Party and the Federation of Labour declared in February 1940, 'There is no conscription in New Zealand, and there will be no conscription whilst Labour is in power',[32] the defeat of Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France in the months immediately following Savage's death substantially changed both the strategic situation in Europe and public opinion in New Zealand. Conscription was introduced in New Zealand on 3 June 1940, just over two months after Savage's death. The decision was endorsed by a card vote of 903–100 at an emergency conference of the Labour Party, the Federation of Labour having voted the same way a few days before.[33]

It is impossible to say with certainty what Savage's position on conscription would have been had he lived. On most matters of principle throughout his life he had been remarkably consistent. To have been leader of a government that was forced to introduce conscription would have been anathema to him, and the manpower regulations that restricted the freedom of the worker during the war would also probably not have been agreed to by him. As Robert Solway, in his eulogy to Savage, wrote,

> He was broken-hearted
> When he read the dismal news of battle
> For he was a man of peace.
> Not for him the glory of
> Marching battalions
> Or sounding drums. He was
> Tired and old.[34]

An indication of his general attitude to the war may be found in the departure of the volunteer 1st Echelon of the 2nd NZEF from Wellington. On New Year's Day of 1940 Savage had talks with General Bernard

Freyberg. On 3 January he farewelled the troops. The following day he attended an official luncheon for officers of the echelon and the ships in the convoy, promising that the soldiers would be provided for adequately on their return. He thus carried out his official duties but privately he grieved. Aruba and Don Alfrey were holidaying in Wellington at the time and staying with Savage and Aruba's parents at their home overlooking the harbour. Everyone rose early to watch the magnificent sight of the fleet of troop ships and naval escorts leaving the harbour at dawn. Savage sat quietly writing at a desk in the lounge and refused repeated requests that he cross to the large window and join the others watching the spectacle. It was bad enough, he said, to be responsible for having recruited and sent all those fine young men, without having to watch them going away to be slaughtered.[35]

While Savage had been indisposed with his operation and convalescence, Lee had turned his attention to others who stood in his way, particularly the powerful and unscrupulous union boss Walsh and the Acting Prime Minister, Fraser. At a social function, for example, Lee called Walsh to his face 'a contemptible cur and a shithouse. . . . a gangster and a thug'.[36] At a caucus meeting a few days later, Lee and his allies attacked Fraser, who was in the chair, Lee gloating that, 'Peter was tried for half an hour. He was white. . . . Peter was in tears.'[37] The dissidents demanded two additions to cabinet, including a returned soldier, and Lee obviously saw himself becoming Minister of Defence with McMillan or Nordmeyer taking the other post. From his sickbed Savage wrote to caucus refusing to increase the size of cabinet.

The Prime Minister returned to his seat in the House for the first and only time after his operation at 7.30 p.m. on Friday 6 October 1939, the night before Parliament adjourned until February 1940.[38] Fraser welcomed Savage and expressed Parliament's hope that the leader's apparent improvement in health would be maintained. In reply, Savage indicated an awareness that this speech would be his valedictory in the chamber that he had entered twenty years before. He said he 'had something of my soul to unburden' and thanked all who had helped him, observing that despite his weakness he had made the effort to get to the House to say that. He reminded his fellow MPs of the 'tremendous' and 'terrible responsibility' they had in governing New Zealand. Political and religious barriers were really meaningless. Most politicians were good people trying to do their best. It was a tragedy that politicians so often spent their time looking for flaws in their opponents, ignoring their many attributes. After leaving the House he visited the members of the press gallery in their rooms before returning home.

A week later Savage resumed some of his duties as Prime Minister when Fraser left for England to interview General Freyberg as a potential commander of New Zealand's Expeditionary Force and to arrange adequate naval escort for New Zealand's troopships. In the mornings Savage worked

in his office at Parliament Buildings.[39] In the afternoons he returned home to answer correspondence, prepare speeches and issue press statements on a wide variety of topics. He rarely made public appearances, though in late November he spent two-and-a-half hours visiting the Centennial Exhibiton in Wellington.

Nash chaired many cabinet meetings for him but Savage himself took the chair at what was to be his last caucus meeting on 4 November. He was clearly unwell and possibly under medication to relieve pain. The Prime Minister told the caucus that he was unwilling to increase the size of cabinet by two because there was no agreement as to whom they should be. According to the 1939 conference formula for cabinet selections, caucus had to agree to his two nominees, Wilson and Thorn, but would not. He had to agree to Lee, Nordmeyer or McMillan, whom caucus preferred, but did not want them in his cabinet. The situation, he believed, was complicated further by the war because, if cabinet was increased in size, the press would agitate for the addition of two members of the National Party to make a war cabinet. After some discussion, Savage finally proposed that Wilson, the party's secretary and member of the Legislative Council, be added to cabinet and four under-secretaries be appointed. In Lee's words, 'the debate became nasty and brutish' as he accused Savage of dictatorship and of being mentally as well as physically ill.[40] He was later to admit, 'I have no doubt we did make the life of Joe Savage a "Hell upon Earth".'[41] Lee's fury was increased by the fact that the dissidents decided to nominate McMillan, not Lee, against Wilson for the one addition to cabinet. Wilson won by 19 votes to 15.

The long and acrimonious meeting exhausted Savage, who, according to Lee, at one point threatened, unrealistically in the light of his physical condition, to 'knock [Lee's] bloody head off'.[42] The leader who for so long without avoiding conflict had been able to mediate it and embrace the various factions in the party now chose to sharpen not soften the conflict. He pitted himself openly, uncompromisingly, and tactlessly, against Lee and the others in caucus who sought to force him to comply with their wishes. The Prime Minister frequently bent over with stabs of pain and occasionally had to rise from his chair and move to the window. One feature of the cancer of the colon from which Savage was suffering is the inability to release gas from the bowel.[43] Long periods of sitting cause discomfort, and spasms associated with the retained wind must be relieved by moving or walking about, as Savage was forced to do while the thoroughly unpleasant meeting dragged on. The developing tumour by that time entering its fatal secondary stage causing liver insufficiency, was undoubtedly as much, if not more, responsible for Savage's tiredness, irritability and inability to concentrate as the attitude and comments of his opponents in caucus. At the end of the afternoon Savage told Lee to go to hell and walked out of the meeting after advising a horrified caucus that he had no intention of being forced by it to do something of which

he totally disapproved. His attitude undoubtedly and understandably further frustrated and incensed his critics and worried even some of those who admired and usually supported the Prime Minister.[44] Savage did not return to caucus after dinner, and Nash took the chair.

The question must be asked why Savage did not resign when he realised shortly before the 1938 election that he was seriously ill; or after the operation in August 1939 showed that his condition was terminal; or after his last formal function entertaining the Papal Legate on 31 January 1940, following which the pain became so severe and the need for frequent rests so demanding that he stopped visiting his office in Parliament; or at the very latest after 22 February 1940 when he became incapacitated following a sudden and severe deterioration in his condition and knew that death was only a matter of time. Was it simply an unwillingness to recognise the inevitable end of his life and work; a pathetic clinging to the trappings of prime ministerial status and power?

Savage's motivation to retain office was much more substantial and far less selfish than that. In 1938 he had remained Prime Minister and concealed the real nature of his illness in order to oversee the passage of the social security legislation, which he did not completely trust Fraser and Nash, both able but colder and more conservative than himself, to carry through undiluted in his absence; and then to win the 1938 election, at which he realised correctly that his personal appeal would be a critical factor influencing the outcome. He continued to occupy the leadership throughout 1939 because of the clear and apparently deepening rift in caucus and his uncertainty as to whom caucus would choose as his successor. Savage was a good judge of human nature and understood the strengths and weaknesses and, insofar as anyone can judge it, the motivation of his cabinet and caucus colleagues. He may not have been completely convinced that Fraser could or should succeed him and he was determined that Lee would not.

The press and the opposition, which entertained a somewhat slim hope of an alliance and coalition government between the National Party and the Labour Party's 'right element led by Mr Savage', recognised the split in Labour's ranks.[45] Savage was ill; Nash, embattled at home and abroad, was preoccupied with the economy; Fraser was having almost as much trouble and lack of success implementing Labour's health scheme. Lee and his formidable allies, McMillan and Nordmeyer, had achieved a narrow majority in caucus on a number of occasions, a majority that might well have been larger and more permanent had it not been for Savage's prestige, influence and intransigence. Throughout 1939 they worked assiduously on undecided members of caucus to create such a majority.[46] Although Nordmeyer and others preferred McMillan, Lee, by that time if not before, clearly saw himself as the alternative to Fraser and noted in August that, 'Peter wants PMship and I think I seem to stand in the way.'[47] The outbreak of war meant that the choice of

successor to Savage could well be portrayed as being between, on the one hand, a charismatic, extroverted, New Zealand-born, relatively youthful war hero, an artist in the use of both the written and spoken word, and, on the other hand, a dour and devious Scot with 'Red Fed' credentials, who had been imprisoned for sedition during World War I and who had the reputation among some of his parliamentary colleagues of invariably waiting until he was sure of which way the majority in caucus or conference was moving before putting himself at its fore and calling down wrath on any deviationists. Even before the outbreak of war, one well-informed observer outside the party had noted in March 1939 that, 'It is common property . . . that there are internal dissensions in cabinet as to whether Lee or Fraser is to succeed Savage. . . . the doctors are quite definite that Savage has cancer of the liver and that it is unlikely he will see the year out.'[48] The fact that even after Lee's expulsion the dissidents could still, though denied a secret ballot, rally 15 votes to Fraser's 33 showed the extent of their hard-core support, which, in different circumstances, might well have been augmented by the winning over of the nine or so other MPs needed for a majority.

Savage believed that his departure immediately after the 1938 election would be a betrayal of those who had voted for the type of Labour government he led and personified, and that his resignation could 'begin the disintegration of the party' insofar as he represented 'the middle course in a far from settled policy.'[49] He had worked very hard after becoming the leader in 1933 to unite the party inside and outside Parliament and indeed to try to unite the country as a whole in order to achieve Labour's economic and social goals. The divisiveness introduced by Lee and his supporters Savage saw as endangering that unity, the party's achievements and prospects, and the very party itself, which he had built his own life around over thirty years. Despite his failing physical strength and the accusation that he was clinging selfishly to office, Savage was determined to remain leader until the beginning of 1940. Webb, Fagan, Nash and, possibly with more misgivings, Fraser, although disturbed by Savage's illness, supported their leader. If possible, a change should be avoided at a time of economic crisis, the outbreak of war and an unresolved division in caucus. Despite his painful illness, Savage was able, at least until late February 1940, to carry out many of his major responsibilities. Throughout January he worked in his office at Parliament Buildings each morning and chaired cabinet on 12 and 15 of that month. He continued to receive official visitors and friends, and broadcast regularly each Sunday. His colleagues also seemed to have become used to his illness, and certainly Nash and Fraser, in their absences overseas during the middle and end of 1939, appeared to have no qualms about leaving Savage to cope not only with his own portfolios and tasks but also with theirs. During the last few months of his life, however, it appears that Savage remained leader primarily for one major reason: to use his influence at the 1940 Labour

Party conference to defeat Lee and his supporters once and for all and to secure the succession for his deputy, Fraser, who was as Acting Prime Minister already consolidating his position.

Savage might no longer be able to travel physically around the country but his voice could still stir audiences through broadcasts. From his first speech in Parliament in 1919, Savage had often spoken in defence of parliamentary democracy and had returned to that topic in his addresses to the 1937 and 1938 Labour Party conferences. Acutely aware of the impatient and fickle nature of society, Savage warned that the destabilisation of any economy and society, including that of New Zealand, could prepare the way for the destruction of political democracy and the creation of a fascist dictatorship or the dictatorship of the proletariat that in practice, Savage observed, was equally pernicious and repugnant. He told the delegates to the 1938 conference:

> It is fashionable nowadays to run down and sneer at Parliamentary democracy; to say that it is out of date; that it is inefficient; that it is incapable of decision. The Labour Party has always denied these charges. . . . But democracy as we believe in it is something more than a political system. It is a form of society and a way of living. . . . if the democratic Government is once overthrown in a time of crisis then its vanquishers, who do not scruple to use force, take very good care that democracy gets no second chance, not even the chance of a free election.
>
> In nearly all cases overseas democracy has fallen victim to the folly of its own internal divisions and power has fallen from its nerveless grasp. One of the main reasons for this failure has been the unpopularity of discipline.
>
> It is in the nature of democracy that essential discipline must be self-imposed, and it must never be forgotten that the privileges and rights of democracy carry with them corresponding duties and responsibilities. More than that—it pre-supposes loyalty and a spirit of service.
>
> After all, democratic institutions are maintained by public opinion, and they are overthrown by public opinion.[50]

Later in the year Savage returned to the same theme and, possibly with not only Hitler and Mussolini in mind but also the British fascist leader Sir Oswald Mosley, once a Labour Party minister, observed that 'Dictators are not born; they are simply evolved. A dictator comes to the surface as naturally as the state of affairs we know as democracy was evolved.'[51]

Tormented by the likely effect of a world-wide holocaust of destruction upon the social legislation that marked the culmination of his life's work in New Zealand, and fearful that democracy might even vanish from the earth, Savage, between the end of November 1939 and the start of March 1940, gave twelve Sunday night broadcasts on 'New Zealand's Problems As I See Them'. Although he spent some time discussing his government's achievements over the previous four years, he dwelt much more on the nature of democracy and freedom. Democracy, argued Savage in a voice unusually animated by his passion, meant not just free elections and a

government answerable to Parliament. If people simply looked to the government, no matter how selected, to make all the decisions and do everything for them, that was little better than a benevolent tyranny. A just and equitable division of wealth, a high level of individual and collective self-help, and tolerance and respect for other people's interests and views were all essential in a truly democratic system. Moderation and forbearance in public and private affairs were needed to guarantee a democratic consensus.

The war and the need for national unity, the Prime Minister contended, should not require the government either to abandon its domestic policies or to seek the enlarging of its powers by emergency regulations unduly restricting traditional freedoms. Savage warned, however, perhaps subconsciously reflecting his view of Lee, that democracy and national unity could be undermined by 'the pernicious doctrine of the disaffected' because,

> Freedom, such as we enjoy, breeds the truest patriots, but its genial climate permits also the growth of cranks and ingrates; of dreamers of fantastic dreams; of ideological oddities and ne'er-do-wells; a diversity of creatures having this at least in common, the urge to propagate error.[52]

Savage's last Christmas was spent quietly at home. Elizabeth French had been dangerously ill after having suffered a particularly severe stroke in October 1938, a tragedy that Savage blamed on the effect of the election excitement on her high blood-pressure.[53] She was to spend much of 1939 and early 1940 being nursed by her daughter in Auckland, but the whole family spent Christmas together. The French family and Savage were joined for dinner by Ian MacKay, the station manager of 2ZB, who had pre-recorded and introduced the Prime Minister's Christmas message. MacKay recalled that over sherry and dinner Savage, who ate a hearty meal, was in an untypically loquacious mood, reminiscing about his early life in Australia and New Zealand and looking back with pride on the achievements of his government.[54] The season of goodwill, however, passed quickly.

Lee realised that if Savage did not die or resign soon, his own opportunity of contesting the leadership before the 1940 Labour Party conference would be gone. The battle for supremacy would, therefore, be fought not in caucus but at the conference. Lee had to build up his support among the delegates and at the same time destroy the credibility of the only figure in the party who could sway the uncommitted more than Lee believed he himself could. By that time Lee was being driven on irresistibly by his unfulfilled obsession to be recognised as a leader. Unlike Savage, Lee believed that the end justified the means. His thwarted ambitions got the better of his good sense. Dynamic to the point of fault, Lee could not restrain himself. Almost a year exactly after writing the 'Lee letter', intended to discredit Nash, Lee published in the left-wing journal *Tomorrow* a short article aimed at Savage.[55] The article was based

on McNeil Weir's *Tragedy of Ramsay MacDonald*, which Lee had just read. He took one of Weir's phrases for the title of his own article, 'Psycho-pathology in Politics'. Lee justified his action in writing the article, which caused a sensation and was soon appearing nationwide in the daily newspapers, by arguing that the situation in late 1939 was identical to that in 1929, when Savage had stated in a letter to Lee that there was nothing wrong in attacking the sick Prime Minister Ward when the nation's interests were at stake. 'If Savage had thought the truth was good enough for Ward, I thought surely it was good enough for Savage', recorded Lee.[56]

The first part of the article discussed the danger of political leaders achieving such popularity that they become 'high priests of a new cult', whose followers believed they were 'infallible for in them ideas are incarnate'. Such leaders become hypocritical autocrats. Indeed, Woodrow Wilson in the United States, Ramsay MacDonald in Britain, and Joseph Ward in New Zealand had become pathological cases, their physical illnesses being reflected in their mental conditions. They became a 'dead but as yet unburied legend'. Without naming Savage, Lee then went on to write of a New Zealand politician who was 'one of the mildest and apparently sweetest-tempered persons in his waking hours' but who in his subconscious dream-world 'was as crazy as . . . a man in Delirium Tremens', a foul-mouthed, vain and violent creature. As that man had aged and become ill, his mind collapsed, the subconscious broke through the 'discipline of the conscious' and 'his daytime life extended to approximate more and more his dream life'. No political party, if it was to survive, could tolerate such a 'physically and mentally sick' leader surrounded by 'sycophants' and hiding 'in the sick room as a way of escape from problems'. Such leaders 'pull their parties with them into the grave' unless 'the party managed to cut off the diseased limb.'

To Lee, 'politics are a battlefield' even if 'words and ideas and not bayonets are the barbs'. But even he could not have predicted the shock his onslaught would create or the violent counter-attack it would provoke. Political parties by their very nature are made up of politically ambitious and combative people and not all the most able were admirers of Lee. By publishing 'Psycho-pathology', Lee had in fact given his enemies the excuse they needed to destroy him politically and the weapon with which to achieve that goal. The reaction to the article was summed up in some verse penned by the Prohibitionist leader John Malton Murray, who wrote to his friend Nash,

> He stabbed his leader in the back
> Then made his bow as leader Jack.
>
> Back-stabbing Jack; oh! it was slick
> To stab dear Joe when he was sick.
>
> Back-stabbing Jack; he always shone
> At playing up for Number One.[57]

Within days of the article's publication, Lee's old electorate of Auckland East, at the instigation of his onetime friend Schramm, passed a motion calling for Lee's expulsion from the party.[58] Even Lee's faithful ally Lyon was 'so disgusted' with 'that filthy article from *Tomorrow*', that when he first saw it he 'ripped the damn thing up'.[59] Just before Christmas 1939 Lee's position as parliamentary under-secretary was revoked after he had refused to give Nash his resignation and challenged Nash to sack him.[60] The party's secretary, Wilson, gave notice that, at the next meeting of Labour's national executive in the New Year, he would move a vote of 'complete confidence' in Savage and 'complete and emphatic disapproval' of Lee's article and actions, which he believed were 'deserving of the severest censure and condemnation'.[61]

On 11 January 1940 the Auckland LRC met at its Queen Street headquarters. A few days before, when visited in Wellington by the Auckland LRC's office secretary, Molly Nolan, who later married Langstone, Savage sadly commented, 'I did everything in my power to help Jack Lee and now he's stabbing me in the back.'[62] The tense and angry delegates packed into the room heard Lee reply to a direct question as to whether he had Savage in mind when he wrote 'Psycho-pathology' that nobody should 'read more into the article than is there'. Miss Eileen Johnston, a delegate from Savage's Auckland West branch, read out Lee's article. Then Young moved that Lee be censured. An amendment followed expressing confidence in both Savage and Lee. The debate lasted for two hours, with Lee apparently making a brilliant speech. Tempers became so frayed that at one point Mrs Winnifred Moore, who had been actively and prominently involved on Savage's electorate committee since the foundation of the party, belted a Lee supporter, John Banks, over the head with her umbrella.[63] Many delegates, some of whom clearly disapproved of Lee's article, were concerned, however, not only with Lee's actions but with the danger of worsening the split in the party; Savage's obvious illness and incapacity; Fraser's personality and Nash's policies; the apparent lack of majority decision-making in caucus; and the fact that trade union bosses of questionable morality, such as Young and Walsh, were playing such a prominent role in the campaign against Lee. There was clearly a reluctance to damn Lee too strongly. The compromise amendment was carried 109 votes to 85 after two recounts amidst disorder that the LRC chairman, Sayegh, appeared unable to quell. Prevented from counting the vote in the normal way, the chairman simply called, 'Lee to the left, Savage to the right'. Lee's supporters were jubilant, but an astonished Savage, who had been deeply hurt by the article, on receiving a report of the LRC's resolution concluded that the delegates could not have realised what the issues were or the 'stupid inconsistency' of their decision. It made him even more determined to remain leader until he could personally explain those issues to the forthcoming conference.

The Labour Party's National Executive met on 13–14 January 1940

and eighteen members attended. Wilson said that the article 'Psycho-pathology in Politics' was only part of the indictment against Lee, who was campaigning for the leadership and might well capture it unless the executive acted. Lee admitted, 'I think Wilson correctly stated the position. . . . I was likely to be a winner.'[64] An amendment softening Wilson's strong condemnation of Lee to 'emphatic disapproval of Lee's article' was defeated 14 votes to 4 and Wilson's motion was then carried by 15 votes to 3, the minority including Lee himself and the party's vice-president, Jim Barclay, MP. The executive next considered a letter from the Masterton branch calling for Lee's expulsion and a motion to that effect was moved by Percy Dowse, seconded by Wilson, and supported unequivocally by Fraser, who had only recently returned to New Zealand. Fraser argued that Lee and his supporters were trying by unacceptable means to capture control of the party and the 1940 conference but needed to destroy Savage's credibility and influence to be sure of doing so.

To everyone's surprise, the president, Roberts, who believed 'the Labour Party was Savage', argued against Fraser, whom he did not particularly like, and suggested that Lee should be given one more chance to mend his ways and help preserve the party's unity. According to McCombs, who represented the caucus on the executive, everyone knew Savage was going to die in a matter of weeks or months. Although few understood or sympathised with Lee's perverse attempt to hound a dying man, most executive members hoped that Lee would be reasonable and refrain from repeating his action. After considerable discussion and recognising the, from his point of view, adverse balance of votes within the executive, Lee agreed to apologise to Savage, to express publicly his regret for writing and publishing 'Psycho-pathology in Politics', and to submit future articles to the executive for its approval prior to publication. He assured the executive, contrary to the facts, that he and his supporters were not trying to influence the appointment of annual conference delegates.

Quite clearly, Lee intended to keep none of those assurances, which he 'signed under duress' but by which 'I lived to fight at Conference'. He recorded that, 'I had to survive until I could face Conference. . . . I could agree until Conference . . . and then, if I failed . . . please myself and take the consequences. . . . I knew also that I would break the agreement rather than be silenced.'[65] Invoking the traditional Labour view that MPs ultimately were the servants of the party outside Parliament, and seeking to widen the scope of the dispute into an arena in which his reputation would be the critical factor, Savage had appealed to conference and the extra-parliamentary party to counter the narrow, unstable majority on some issues, especially cabinet selection, against him in caucus. The tenacious and resilient Lee now intended to appeal to the same conference against a much larger and more determined majority on the national executive. To succeed he would have to neutralise Savage's influence and

change the views and allegiance of many participants in the conference.

The members of the executive dispersed throughout New Zealand after their meeting and Lee proceeded to tell the press that his expression of regret at having published the article was in no way a retraction or apology and that 'Psycho-pathology in Politics' 'was correct in word and in inference'. Savage replied,

> It is beyond me to understand a member of a party who tries to destroy the selected leader of the party as a political force, and who will go so far as to attack that leader during an illness, and who, after apologising for his action, commences again to question the report of the position issued on behalf of the National Executive.[66]

Lee was unrepentant and unashamed. He wrote to Tyndall, 'Conference is near. Joe has slipped. Peter seems only to have advertised himself as a bb. They sharpen cutlery for me and are fearful of the double edge.'[67] Returning to Auckland, Lee moved to quieten unrest among members of his own branch executives, 'many of whom were concerned because I had assailed the Old Fish.'[68] He wrote further articles on the situation for *Tomorrow* and the Communist Party's *Peoples Voice*, which since 1937 had supported Lee on a number of issues including his defence of Russia's invasion of Finland.[69] Some indication of his actions and motives at that time is given by Lee's diary, in which he noted that he had

> inspired an article in the *Observer* which will raise the 'Lee' support and which will infuriate M. J. Savage still more. It will increase the tension. . . . I have also contacted a large number of folk and am beating them into something like an organisation. I shall organise from end to end of New Zealand . . . accompanied by a successful propaganda drive.[70]

Lee's supporters worked hard to build up a block of delegates for the conference. In Auckland they organised from the office of Norman Douglas, secretary of the Brewery Workers' Union and the Auckland Trades Council.[71] Every vote was considered important. Arthur Osborne, the MP for Manukau, for example, handed over credentials for eight or nine delegates, all of which went to selected Lee supporters. Two weeks later, after consolidating his support in Auckland, Lee—aware that Fraser was also touring the country 'cultivating the party from Auckland to Invercargill' and that, although 'the Old Fellow is dying', Savage was 'desperately anxious to live long enough to decapitate me'—visited Napier, Christchurch and Dunedin to rally support and hold meetings with Barnard, Carr, Williams, Anderton, Nordmeyer, McMillan, Frost and others. In the Dunedin Town Hall Munro introduced Lee to an audience of 600–700 people as the future leader of the party whom Munro would follow to the limit.[72] Everywhere he went, Lee told people that Savage was dying but privately he feared that there might not be 'time to capture the party' before the Easter conference began.[73] But when he doubted, Lee was reassured and driven on by his equally

aggressive and arrogant wife, Mollie, who kept telling her husband he should be the Prime Minister.[74]

If Lee was determined 'to capture the party', Savage, by then under a great deal of pressure politically and personally, was equally determined that he should not. Until a few days before his death, the Prime Minister 'rose daily and walked about his room "training" as he called it for the Labour Conference.'[75] But although the Prime Minister entertained old friends, such as his former neighbours Mervyn and Cecil Lusty, and appeared physically and mentally to be in fine shape, appearances were deceptive. The spirit was still willing but the body was weakening fast. His faithful friend, Alf French, to whom Savage kept joking, 'What fine fellows we will be when we are gone', cared for Savage day and night. French recalled privately after Savage's death,

> I can look back over the 34 years we lived together with pleasure for we never had a quarrel and he was one of the most thoughtful of men. My children would always seek his advice and he was always ready to give it, nothing was too much trouble for him where they were concerned.[76]

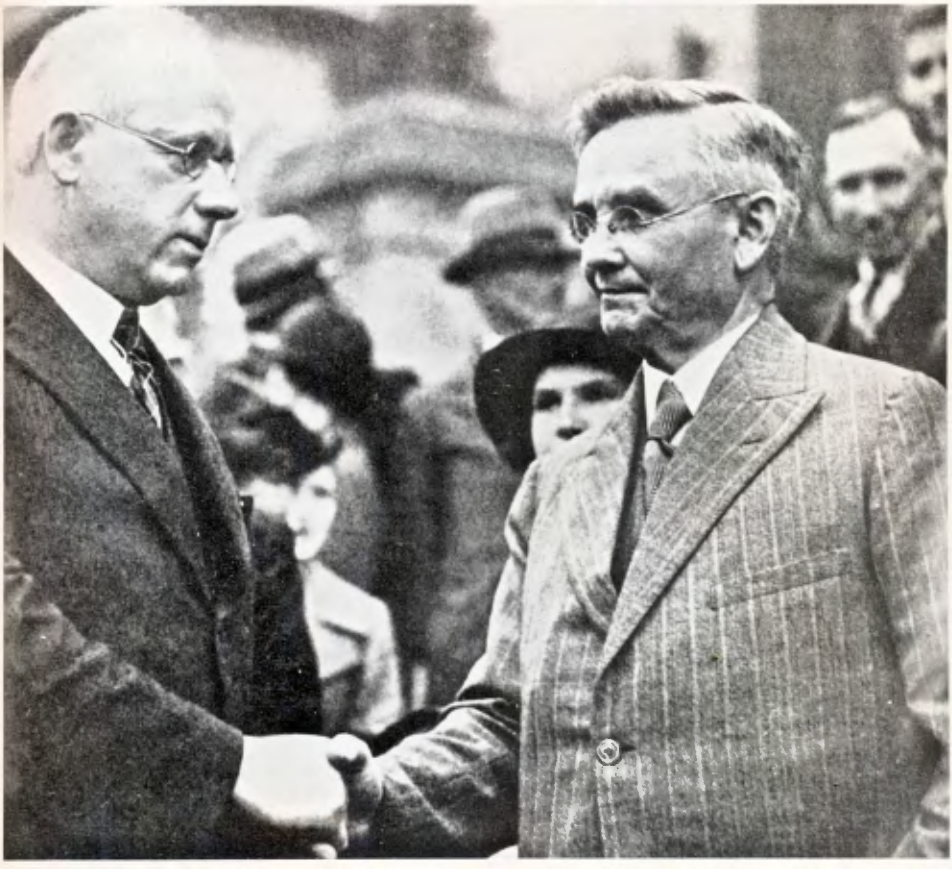
Before retiring at night, French made sure Savage's walking stick was on his bed so that if 'he was forced to' he could summon help with a 'miner's knock' on the floor or wall.

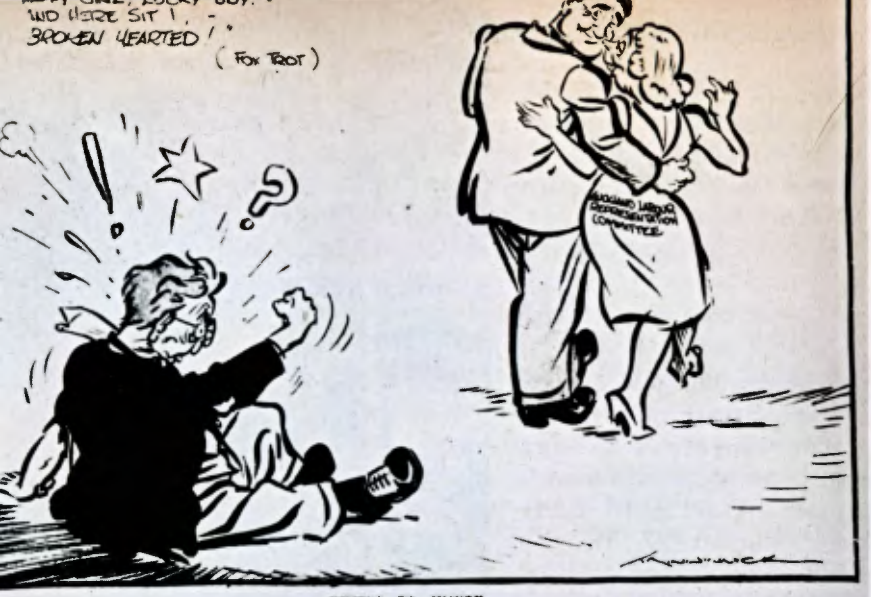
On Saturday 23 March, after being informed by the national executive that, in its opinion, he had not adhered to his promises of 13 January and that the matter would be referred to the conference, Lee and his chief caucus supporters met to discuss their tactics when conference opened the following Monday. The one thing that they feared was that Savage, now bedridden, would be well enough to attend the conference and speak in support of a motion to expel Lee.[77] They were delighted, therefore, when they received a telephone call from Scrimgeour, who told them, incorrectly, that Savage, whom Scrimgeour had been visiting regularly, had died. According to Lee, 'There was no regret' and 'we had brandies, three each, to celebrate Savage's death.'[78] The issue at conference, they believed, would now be the election of a new Prime Minister and 'Lee, Barnard, Fraser and Sullivan' appeared to Lee to be the four contenders. Lee believed his hard core of fourteen votes would provide a sufficient base to give him the leadership.[79] 'The brandy was wasted', as Lee later wryly recorded. Savage was not dead.

The annual conference opened on Monday 25 March. Present were delegates representing fifty-two LRCs with ninety votes; 373 branches with 423 votes; and 188 trade unions with 513 votes. One of the conference's first decisions was to allow national unions to poll their full card vote with fewer delegates present than in the past, provided that those with more than twelve votes had at least four delegates present. Roberts of the watersiders, Walsh of the seamen, Young of the hotel workers, Major Bill Pharazyn of the clerical workers, Gus McLagan of the miners, and

One of the last public speeches Savage gave when he farewelled the 1st Echelon before they departed for overseas. As he feared, many never returned. *NZ Free Lance*

Savage and his successor, Fraser. *NZLP*





INSULT TO INJURY

The Auckland LRC's attempt to support both Savage and Lee following publication of Lee's 'Psycho-Pathology in Politics' hurt and angered Savage. *Sir Gordon Minhinnick and NZ Herald*

Although not present in person at the 1940 Labour Party conference, Savage was largely responsible for insuring Lee's expulsion from the party. *Sir Gordon Minhinnick and NZ Herald*

"TURNED OUT NICE AGAIN, HASN'T IT?"

A view of the crowd lining the top of Queen Street as the gun-carriage with Savage's coffin turns into Karangahape Road. *NZ Herald*

Thousands of mourners assembled at Bastion Point, where Savage was buried. *NZ Herald*

The Savage Memorial

Arthur Cook and Dick Eddy of the New Zealand Workers' Union were all committed to Lee's expulsion. Roberts in his presidential address, Wilson in the executive's annual report, and Fraser, who read Savage's parliamentary report, all attacked Lee.

Despite Lee's repeated provocations, Savage had previously drawn back from pressing publicly for Lee's expulsion, turning the disunity within the parliamentary caucus into possibly an irrevocable split at all levels of the party. Savage continued up to the 1940 conference to express sorrow and some bewilderment at the antagonism that by then existed between himself and Lee.[80] But, as he confided to Purtell a few days before the confusing Auckland LRC meeting in January, instead of accepting the directions of the 1939 conference,

> Mr Lee and a few others have insisted upon following their own course and making it impossible for Caucus to be anything but a bear garden. While Mr Lee and his friends continue to sow the seeds of disunity—which will ultimately wreck the party if not checked—my hands are tied. I cannot rush into print to defend myself.
>
> My training in the Labour movement has taught me that whatever internal trouble there may be in the party it should be settled through the party machinery, and not by circulars and newspaper articles which are read by everyone.[81]

Savage dismissed Lee's stance on conscription and the control of the banking system as 'stunts' because there was 'no likelihood' of conscription being introduced while Savage was Prime Minister and 'everyone knows . . . Labour stands for complete control of the whole banking system'.[82] The time had finally arrived, Savage decided, to pay the undoubted cost and expel Lee from the party.

Fraser, although always recognised as a member of the Savage faction in caucus, had not been a regular and vocal defender of his leader or Nash during the caucus battles. But he certainly disliked Lee's attacks on the dying Savage, opposed the policies Lee espoused and personified, and perhaps most importantly recognised Lee as a rival for the succession. He therefore wholeheartedly led the attack on Lee at the 1940 conference. Fraser, Wilson, Webb, and the union and party leaders who supported them, however, might not, in Savage's absence, have been able to get a majority of votes to expel Lee at the conference had they not held a trump card: Savage's last parliamentary report.

The main part of the report had been written by Savage, given to McIntosh for typing in late February, and returned for Savage's final approval and signature on 26 February.[83] Savage regretted that the war would 'greatly upset the economic and social life of our people' and might temporarily interfere with implementation of the party's policies.[84] He then, after a few formalities, defended his government and its actions against those who criticised it for being too cautious or too radical and declared that, in the context of the difficulties faced, 'I am not prepared

to apologise for any of our actions'. He was also not prepared to 'take risks at the expense of the wage earner and the men and women on the lowest income', who were 'always the first to suffer in time of crisis'. He had expected opposition from vested interests at home and abroad, who had tried to break the government by a foreign exchange crisis. Labour had managed to survive without having to abandon its commitment to full employment and social security. Those were solid achievements, which were worth defending against foreign aggression or against those within the party who threatened its unity by 'pursuing certain alternative and more doubtful means of achieving our objects'.

Then Fraser read a surprise addendum to the report, which raised the emotions of the pro-Savage and anti-Lee delegates to fever pitch. An experienced and clever political tactician, Savage knew well the advantages of choosing the emotional ground on which to fight battles and also the ways in which leaders of opposition factions could be separated from potential followers. To become a leader one needed the motive, opportunity and resources. Lee had the motive. Savage was determined to deny him the opportunity and the resources. When the main report had been returned to Savage for checking and signature, Savage had asked McIntosh to draft a further confidential section and had given him notes written in pencil on both sides of a sheet of cardboard. Savage, according to McIntosh, also 'gave a number of verbal instructions which were strictly and literally adhered to', and the draft and the sheet of cardboard were returned to Savage the following day.[85] Although Savage approved the confidential draft, he ordered that it should not be stencilled and duplicated together with the main report but merely typed up and held in readiness for him to take with him to the conference.

Savage met Roberts and Fraser on 11 and 12 March but he did not tell them exactly what he planned to do at the conference. A day later, on the afternoon of Wednesday 13 March, Savage's condition deteriorated suddenly and he had to be sedated against the pain. Alf French, while tidying the Prime Minister's room, picked up the piece of cardboard he had given to Savage as a backing when he was writing or signing letters in bed. French recalled, 'I noticed later on he had filled it with writing, I said I must get you a clean board. Joe said look after that board Alf, it is valuable.'[86] As a result, French put the cardboard carefully to one side.

A further serious deterioration in Savage's condition took place on Sunday 17 March. Fraser, Fagan and Webb were summoned. Aruba returned to Wellington from Auckland. On Saturday 23 March, Savage's sixty-eighth birthday, Berendsen visited and was thanked by Savage for his loyalty and advice, even though, said Savage, he suspected Berendsen had never voted for him. Savage also in a rather wry comment quoted some lines from 'The Village Blacksmith' about his once strong arms now wasted with illness. 'Mr Savage did not wish to die. How could he? He

knew that his mind was as clear as ever it had been; and there was so much he wanted to do and knew that he could do if spared.'[87] Everyone, including Savage, however, knew that the end was very near. Archbishop Thomas O'Shea and Father Robinson, the Superior of Wellington's St Gerard's Redemptorist Monastery, gave Savage the sacraments of the Church. Webb arranged for Rowland Savage and his daughters to telephone from Australia, but by the time the call came the following Sunday, Savage was too ill to speak and Webb had to convey to Savage his brother's wish 'to meet him again in spirit in a better land.'[88]

When it became obvious that Savage would not be able to attend the conference and might even die before it commenced, McIntosh contacted Fraser and gave him Savage's confidential report. Although the draft included Savage's pencilled alterations and was initialled by the Prime Minister, Savage was by then too weak to sign the document with his normal strong, distinctive signature. Fraser was concerned that there could be doubts about its authenticity. French was asked if the original notes still existed. 'I said yes . . . and then went in and said a few words to Joe and then went to get the board where I had placed it, he saw me take it, I see you have got the board Alf. I said yes. Your Sec wants it, he said thats right.'[89] On the card, which Fraser read to the conference, Savage had written,

> Regret to say since last conference internal conditions have not improved. For about two years my life has been a living hell. For the past twelve months, in spite of last conference's decision, I have been attacked through the public press with all the venom and lying innuendo of the political sewer. . . . They emphasise the worst points and say nothing about the strong ones. . . . I have been referred to by Mr Lee within the hearing of others as the silly old bastard up on the hill, the pathological case. Allow me to read *Tomorrow* to illustrate the definite attempts Mr Lee has made, largely during my illness, to destroy me as a political force. Was that the act of a loyal supporter of Labour? . . . No member can be loyal to the Government and attack the leader at the same time. . . . Last caucus that I attended made it plain to me that conference decisions were not worth the paper they were written upon. . . . What is the position of a Labour Prime Minister? Is he expected to go to the people and make promises in the name of Labour, and before the life of Parliament for which he was elected is half exhausted, allow himself to be set aside by a few conspirators in the ranks. Or is he entitled to await the challenge of pledge breakers and place hunters on the floor of the house and if he is defeated go down in full view of the people. Then to exercise his prerogative under the constitution to seek an immediate dissolution of Parliament so that the people may again be consulted. . . . I hope conference will not expect me to act in that way.[90]

After the reading of Savage's report, Wilson claimed that the issue was not 'democracy' but 'whether any member has the right to attack the leader, even if he is ill, in an anti-Labour paper' and repeatedly defy rulings of the conference and the national executive.[91] Since his operation Savage

had 'made a marvellous recovery . . . nothing short of a miracle' until, perhaps only coincidentally but perhaps not, Lee had published 'Psycho-pathology in Politics' and Savage had suffered a relapse. The party's secretary concluded, 'And now Joe Savage is dying. Jack Lee stabbed Joe Savage in the back.'

Fraser spoke next, alleging that, 'it would have been more decent and honourable for Mr Lee to have taken a revolver and shot the Prime Minister dead than to have tried to destroy him by spreading the idea that he was physically and mentally a wreck.'[92] While Fraser had been overseas and Savage had been ill, Lee, according to the Deputy Prime Minister, had precipitated such unpleasant and inconclusive scenes in caucus that Savage had felt unable to face any more until the whole affair had been dealt with by conference.

The debate raged for six hours on the executive's and Prime Minister's reports, which were finally adopted by conference, incidentally but significantly confirming the new method of card voting.

Lee's erstwhile supporter Schramm then moved Lee's expulsion, admitting that while he had supported Lee initially because he had believed Lee's talk about democracy, he had discovered that all Lee really wanted was a cabinet post. If Lee 'had been made Minister of Defence you would never have heard any talk from him about democracy'.[93] The motion was seconded by Lee's former Grey Lynn branch chairman, Jock Stewart, who argued that, 'the alternative to his expulsion is continuous guerilla warfare'.[94]

Although Lee was later to admit that the constant pressure on Savage culminating in 'Psycho-pathology in Politics' 'probably' helped to kill Savage and 'shorten the Prime Minister's life by a month or two',[95] he rejected the charge on the floor of conference. In a passionate speech, Lee defended himself forcefully. Barnard, Nordmeyer, McMillan, O'Brien, Barclay and Catherine Stewart, the MP for Wellington West, without attempting to defend Lee's articles, argued that he should not be expelled. Lee dismissed Savage's report to the conference and even forty years later still saw it as 'the document of a madman'. But that last message by Savage to the party that he had played such a prominent role in creating, sustaining and leading to victory could not be discounted. To most of the delegates, Lee, not Savage, was the vain, ambitious, vindictive man, whose frustrated ambition and lack of scruples had divided the party and slandered its dying leader. Even among those who argued against expulsion, there were many such as Nordmeyer who did so not because they condoned Lee's actions but because they genuinely believed that Savage should have accepted all caucus decisions without question or should have resigned when he became seriously ill; or who feared the divisions of the party that would inevitably follow Lee's departure; or who disliked the thought of Fraser and Nash becoming the party's new leaders. The alteration to the system of card voting proved unnecessary except insofar as it made

the majority for expulsion more decisive. McCombs acted as the returning officer and as soon as he started counting the votes it was obvious that Savage's emotional appeal from his deathbed had destroyed Lee. Amidst pandemonium in the hall, with people standing on chairs to get a better view or shouting each other down, Lee was expelled by 546 votes to 344. That night Lee recorded in his diary, 'Exit from the Labour Party, slaughtered. . . . The Old Man had beaten me. . . . The Old Man had won.'[96] Unlike the great divisions in the British or Australian Labour Parties, almost no prominent party members defected and only forty conference delegates left with Lee and met in his home that night to form a new Democratic Labour Party.[97]

Savage knew that he had won his final political battle. According to Alf French, 'to the very last his mind was on the conference and he fought hard to live to see it'.[98] He wanted to know not only the fate of Lee but also conference's support for the government's declaration of war, which was endorsed by 821 votes to 104. The nun who nursed him recalled that Savage, refusing to be sedated, 'anxiously awaited the results of the Conference' and, when Paddy Webb and others finally reported on the outcome, 'although he was very tired, he fully realised what they had to tell him.'[99] In Elizabeth French's words, 'he squeezed Paddy's hand twice and then sank into unconsciousness.'[100]

Four days after his sixty-eighth birthday and a little more than twenty-four hours after learning of Lee's defeat, Savage died at 3.15 a.m. on the morning of Wednesday 27 March 1940. Webb, Fagan and Alf French, who had been taking it in turns to stay with their old friend through the night, were at his bedside. Later that morning, when conference met at 10.30, Fraser announced the Prime Minister's death. One delegate recalled that, 'a deep silence, broken only by the sound of subdued sobbing, filled the conference hall.'[101] The conference, shocked by the events of the past forty-eight hours, terminated early.

According to the death certificate, Savage died of 'liver insufficiency from carcinomatosis (liver)', from which he had been suffering for '14 days'. That was 'secondary to carcinoma of colon' of 'some 2 years' duration.' The Prime Minister did not die a wealthy man. The income of his estate valued at £3,040 was left, in his will dated 26 February 1930, to Alf and Elizabeth French in equal shares throughout their lives. On the death of either the total income went to the survivor. On the death of the survivor the residue of the estate was to be divided three ways among Bob and Aruba French and Savage's niece May.[102] Alf French received all Savage's personal effects, specifically his guns and wireless equipment. Although not mentioned in the will, Savage's large collection of books was given by Aruba to the Auckland Labour Club.[103]

Savage died at the height of his popularity. He had become a legend in his lifetime and the public as a whole never accepted the claims of Lee and other detractors that the legend was a myth, even though time and

Lee's relentless propaganda for over forty years dimmed and distorted the memory. On 4 April 1940 Fraser was elected to succeed Savage as Labour's leader. He was nominated by Sullivan, who for a short while had considered contesting the post himself. Although Nordmeyer's request for a secret ballot was defeated, fifteen MPs still voted openly against Fraser, twelve for McMillan and three for Carr. Barnard immediately resigned from the Labour Party in protest at Fraser's selection and refusal to promise that cabinet would in future be elected by caucus. The MP for Napier became the only other Labour MP to join Lee in the political wilderness.[104] At the next meeting of caucus, Nash was elected unopposed as deputy leader and, after Fraser announced that he would accept caucus control of cabinet appointments, McMillan was voted into cabinet to fill the vacancy left by Savage. He was given the portfolio of marine, not health, and resigned in 1941 to return to private medical practice.

If Holland had died in 1933 at an opportune time for the Labour Party, enabling Savage to succeed as leader and take the party to the election victory that had eluded his predecessor, so also Savage's death, it can be argued, was equally fortuitous in its timing. A gentle man of peace and warm humanity, despite the determination and strength he showed on so many occasions, Savage would probably not have been as successful a wartime leader as Fraser became, although in the early months of the war Savage's performance in that position could not be faulted. But Savage would certainly have been more humane and democratic than Fraser proved to be under war conditions. Ruthless, calculating, cynical, insensitive and often insulting when dealing with others, Fraser lacked Savage's mystical vision and charismatic appeal. As with Lee, Fraser also could justify the means used by the end sought. A fellow Labour cabinet minister observed, 'Fraser is the greatest underground engineer I know, and Machiavelli has nothing on him.'[105] While allowing the letter and trappings of caucus democracy, Fraser, with cunning sagacity, was in practice an autocrat who largely destroyed its spirit. In the eyes of cabinet colleagues such as Wilson, McCombs, Nordmeyer and Mason, party officials such as Jim Roberts, civil servants such as Berendsen and Ashwin, and a longtime colleague such as Roy Holland, the son of Labour's former leader, Fraser was a vindictive, bad-tempered and sadistic bully.[106] In time, though many of his critics who hated him as a person recognised his great ability as a political operator, his success as a minister of education, and even his widely praised statesmanship as a wartime Prime Minister, few Labour activists respected him as a person and even fewer liked him. Almost no-one, however, dared challenge him. Despite his apparent willingness to allow caucus to elect cabinet and to accept majority decisions in caucus, Fraser was in practice a much more authoritarian personality than Savage. Although he hated the Communist Party, his views on party discipline

were very similar to Lenin's concept of democratic centralism within a communist party, as he revealed a few months after becoming Prime Minister when he defended the use of the police to search the homes of pacifists, Social Crediters, and Labour Party dissidents.

> Those who place their own opinions, big and small, important and unimportant, and their consciences, or something they are pleased to call their consciences, which they sometimes elevate to the status of deity, before the interests of the Labour Movement and the country as a whole are much better for the time being, and perhaps permanently, outside the ranks of the Party.
>
> Better a small Party that knows its own mind and is prepared to work united for its purpose, whether as a Government or in opposition, than a conglomeration of diversified and quarrelling factions.[107]

One of Fraser's more peculiar characteristics was his well-known love of funerals. Savage's funeral and last resting place, organised by Fraser and Nash, were both much more ostentatious and stage-managed than Savage, a man of very simple tastes, would have approved. But although the elaborate formal farewell would have had little appeal, Savage would have been deeply moved by the unprecedented tribute from hundreds of thousands of ordinary New Zealanders of all ages who stood silently in the streets as a last gesture of respect and affection. The body lay in state in the vestibule of Parliament for two days, during which some 50 000 people filed past. A solemn requiem mass was conducted at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart by Archbishop O'Shea on Saturday 30 March before the coffin left Wellington. The purple-and-black-draped train took a slow twenty-eight hours to reach Auckland. At twenty stops along the 720-kilometre route, crowds of up to 12 000 people gathered, as bands played the hymns 'Abide with me' and 'Lead Kindly Light'. Radio bulletins described in detail Savage's last journey home to Auckland.[108]

It was estimated that some 200 000 Aucklanders met the train or lined the twelve kilometres from the railway station, up Queen Street, across Grafton Bridge, down Carlton Gore Road running past the back of the Captain Cook Brewery, through Newmarket, and along Remuera Road to Savage's resting place in a gun emplacement at Fort Bastion at Orakei. The fort had been built in 1885 on a high point opposite Rangitoto Island and overlooking the Waitemata Harbour. The feared Russian naval invasion had never eventuated and fifty-five years later there was little to remind the thousands of mourners of Bastion Point's martial past. Vast banks of flowers and wreaths surrounded the burial vault and 200 boats bobbed at anchor below the point. As the coffin arrived, borne on a gun carriage and draped in a Maori cloak and the New Zealand ensign flown by the *H.M.S. Achilles* in its battle against the German battleship *Graf Spee*, a large party of Maoris, many from the adjacent pa, lamented with a powhiri the death of their great rangatira. The funeral service at the

graveside was conducted by his friend Bishop Liston.

Savage's body remained in its burial vault until June 1941, when it was removed for almost two years to St Patrick's Cathedral while the Savage Memorial was constructed. Designed by Tibor Donner and Anthony Bartlett, sculpted by R. O. Gross, and built by Fletcher Construction at a cost of £34,553, raised by numerous small donations, the Savage Memorial, with its large mausoleum, towering column, reflecting pool, sunken gardens, and located on one of the most beautiful sites in New Zealand, was certainly the most spectacular and expensive memorial ever erected to honour a New Zealand politician. Savage's remains were reinterred in a tunnel deep below the monument, which was dedicated before a crowd of 10 000 people on 28 March 1943. On the tomb was the simple and apt inscription,

Michael Joseph Savage
1872–1940
HE LOVED HIS FELLOW MEN

BIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX

ANDERTON, William Theophilus. b. Birmingham, England, 1889. d. 1966. A Methodist lay preacher who served in Royal Artillery World War I. Herbalist. Member of the British Socialist Party and Independent Labour Party. Arrived NZ 1921 and joined NZLP in Christchurch the same year. Moved to Auckland 1925 and represented Auckland East and later Eden on LRC from that date. Chairman of committee raising money for LRC office and liquidation of past debts 1927-28. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Eden 1928 and 1931. MP Eden 1935–46, Auckland Central 1946–60. Minister of Internal Affairs 1957–60. Member Auckland City Council for nine years and Auckland Transport Board for five years. President Auckland Savings Bank 1964. Later followed into Parliament by his son-in-law, Norman Vazey Douglas, and his grandson, Roger Owen Douglas.

ARCHER, Rev. John Kendrick. b. Leicestershire, England, 1865. d. 1949. A Baptist minister who came to New Zealand in 1908. Belonged to Fabian Society and Labour Party in Britain before coming to NZ. Editor *United Labour Leader* 1913 while minister at Napier 1908–13, and joined SDP after the 1913 Unity Conference. President Baptist Union of New Zealand 1916–18, defeating in 1916 the Rev. Howard Elliott, later leader of the anti-Labour Protestant Political Association. Secretary NZ Baptist Missionary Society 1910–18. Foundation president Invercargill WEA 1915 and subsequently very active in Christchurch WEA. President NZLP 1928–29 and vice-president 1922–25, 1927–28, 1929–31. Mayor of Christchurch 1925–31 and Christchurch City Councillor 1921–25, 1931–35. Invercargill Borough Councillor 1915–16. NZLP candidate Invercargill 1919, Christchurch North 1922 and 1928, Kaiapoi 1931. Member Legislative Council 1937–49.

ARMSTRONG, Hubert Thomas (Tim). b. Bulls 1875. d. 1942. Of Irish parentage, Armstrong was a convinced Roman Catholic and supporter of Irish nationalism. Flaxmill worker, bushman, coal- and gold-miner, railway worker, watersider, brickyard employee, President Waihi Miners' Union 1907–9 and vice-president NZ Federation of Miners and NZ Federation of Labour 1908–10. Secretary West Coast Workers' Union 1909–14. Secretary Christchurch Tramways Union 1919–22. Arrested during 1913 strike. Opponent of conscription during World War I and gaoled for sedition 1917. In 1919, with F. R. Cooke and W. Nash, tried unsuccessfully to get NZLP to adopt pacifism as an election policy. Armstrong in 1940 is reputed to have opposed in cabinet

the decision to introduce conscription during World War II. President NZLP 1934–35 and vice-president 1921–22. Served as member of Waihi and Runanga Borough Councils and as a Christchurch City Councillor 1919–25, 1927–29. Independent Labour candidate Ohinemuri 1908, NZLP candidate Christchurch North 1919, and Labour MP Christchurch East 1922–42. Between 1935 and 1942 held at various times positions of Minister of Labour, Immigration, Health, Housing, and Works, and introduced a wide range of important labour legislation. A man of undoubted honesty and a capable minister.

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BALNEAVIS, Henare Te Raumoa Huatahi (Bal, Rau, or HRH). b. Muriwai near Gisborne 1884. d. 1940. Father a surveyor. Grandson of Lieut. Col. H. C. Balneavis and Hineiahua of Whakatohea tribe near Whakatane. Ngati Kahungunu of Wairoa. Educated Te Aute College. Worked for five years as native agent at Gisborne before becoming private secretary to chief judge of Native Land Court. In 1909 became private secretary to Apirana Ngata and was to remain private secretary to successive Ministers of Native Affairs, including Ngata, Coates and Savage, for thirty years until his death. Longtime member of the council and executive of the Polynesian Society. Outstanding athlete and golfer and prominent New Zealand golfing administrator. Awarded Member Victorian Order 1927.

BARCLAY, James Gillispie. b. Banks Peninsula 1882. d. 1972. Farmer. Served in 1st NZEF World War I, 1915–18. Farmed Canterbury and Manawatu before purchasing 1600-acre farm at Omana, North Auckland. In 1928 reputed to be 'the owner of possibly the best and most successfully worked freehold property in the district'. Director Northern Wairoa Co-operative Dairy Co. and member Kaipara and Whangarei Hospital Boards and North Auckland Electric Power Board. Labour candidate Kaipara 1928. MP Marsden 1935–43. Vice-president NZLP 1938–40. Minister of Agriculture, Marketing and Lands 1941–43. NZ High Commissioner to Australia 1944–50. Later retired to Christchurch, where his son, Bruce Gillispie Barclay, became Labour MP for Christchurch Central.

BARKER, Tom. b. Lake District, England, 1887. d. London 1970. Farmhand, soldier in 8th Hussars Regiment, and Liverpool tramway conductor. Arrived NZ 1909. Tramway worker and Auckland correspondent ('Spanwire') *Maoriland Worker*. Secretary Auckland Socialist Party, of which Savage was at the time chairman, 1909. Subsequently IWW organiser and imprisoned during 1913 strike. Went to Australia 1914 and became IWW leader there. Jailed for sedition and deported in 1918 to South America, where in 1919 he started a marine transport workers' union in Argentina. In 1920s lived in Russia, where he became personally acquainted with Lenin, and then in the United States, recruiting American technicians to assist Soviet industrialisation. Organised non-Russians employed in Donetz Basin. Subsequently returned to England with his Russian wife, a former member of the Imperial Ballet, and established market for Russian oil. When Associated Motorists' Petrol Company of New Zealand formed in 1932, Barker returned to New Zealand and negotiated contract for Soviet oil marketed under name 'Europa'. Later mayor of St Pancras Borough, London.

BARNARD, William Edward (Bill). b. Carterton 1886. d. 1958. Educated Victoria University College, Wellington. Solicitor 1908 and barrister 1925. Practised at Foxton, Te Aroha, Helensville and, after 1943, at Tauranga. Te Aroha Borough Councillor 1911–13. World War I served Royal Army Medical Corps 1916–17 and RAF 1918–19. President Chamber of Commerce at Helensville 1924–28, where he practised law after war. Staunch Anglican. Joined NZLP 1922. Secretary Helensville branch 1923–28 and president Kaipara LRC 1924–28. Labour candidate Kaipara 1925. Moved to Napier and MP Napier 1928–43. Speaker House of Representatives 1936–43. Resigned from Labour Caucus and NZLP 1940 in protest at election of Peter Fraser as Labour's leader. Joined John A. Lee's Democratic Labour Party and lost his seat at 1943 election. Mayor of Tauranga 1950–52. President Institute of Pacific Relations. A longtime monetary reformer and a returned soldier who opposed conscription in World War II. President NZ Council for the Adoption of Chinese Refugee Children, for which in 1948 he was awarded the Chinese Order of the Brilliant Star.

BARNES, David. b. England 1894. d. 1970. Arrived NZ 1908. A farmer and returned soldier wounded at Gallipoli with 1st NZEF and later commissioned RAF. Foundation member and president Fairlie branch Crown Tenants' Association. MP Waitaki 1935–38. Later director State Advances Corporation and Timaru area commander Home Guard World War II.

BARRELL, Charles Abraham. b. Rangiora 1881. d. 1958. Farmer, railway engineer and army sergeant-major. After managing an engineering company, commenced business in farm implements in Hamilton 1929. President Hamilton Bowling Club. Labour MP Hamilton 1935–43 and unsuccessful Labour candidate Hamilton by-election 1945. Town clerk and harbour-master at Kawhia and member Auckland Harbour Board. Land Sales Commissioner Hamilton. Associated with the Social Credit movement.

BARTRAM, Frederick Notley. b. Worcester, England, 1869. d. 1948. Educated King's Grammar School, Warwick. Ironmongering apprentice Essex 1885–89. Migrated to Melbourne 1890. Arrived Christchurch 1895 after spending five years in Australia. Life assurance agent. Christchurch Socialist Party from 1906. Helped form ULP branch Gisborne 1913. Moved to Auckland and became Labour MP Grey Lynn 1919–28 (defeated by 64 votes). Close personal friend of Savage, Parry and Fraser, and described by Fraser as a true orator and one of the best speakers ever to have sat in the NZ Parliament. Auckland City Councillor 1929–33, member hospital board 1931–33 and transport board 1931–35. Stood as independent Labour in 1931 after losing Labour nomination for Grey Lynn to John A. Lee. Restored by unanimous vote of NZLP Executive to approved list of candidates June 1938. Active again in Grey Lynn Labour Party after expulsion of Lee in 1940.

BERENDSEN, Sir Carl August. b. Sydney, Australia, 1890. d. 1973. Graduated LLM Victoria University College of Wellington. Representative cricketer. Served with NZ forces in Samoa World War I. 1917 became chief clerk in Labour Department and in 1918 deputy registrar of Industrial Unions. Joined Imperial Affairs Office 1926 and Secretary for External Affairs 1928–32. Head of Prime Minister's Department 1932–43. Secretary NZ War Cabinet 1939–43. Attended all Imperial Conferences 1926–43 and also the assemblies of the League of Nations and later the United Nations. 1943–44 NZ High Commissioner in Australia. 1944–48 ambassador to United States and United Nations. Recognised as the creator of the NZ Department of External (later Foreign) Affairs. A close collaborator and unqualified admirer of Savage 1935–40. Knighted 1946.

BLACK, William Pierpont (original surname Negrescu). b. Rumania c. 1877. d. Sydney 1942. Arrived NZ 1901 and changed his name to Black. President United Furniture Trades Union 1904 and delegate to Auckland T and LC. Active member Auckland Socialist Party from its formation in 1908 until 1911 and elected general secretary NZ Socialist Party 1909. Black edited a number of small newspapers such as the *Voice of Labour* and *Capital and Labour Review* (later renamed the *New Zealand National Review*). At first very radical but became a vituperative critic of the syndicalist 'Red Feds' and strongly opposed 1912 Waihi and 1913 waterfront general strikes. Helped form arbitrationist union at Huntly. A strident racist, very anti-Chinese and anti-Japanese. In 1919 formed short-lived National Labour Party of New Zealand and opposed J. T. Paul, the NZLP's president, in the Dunedin South electorate. In 1921 formed another transitory National Progressive and Moderate Labour Party. Later moved to Australia.

BLOODWORTH, Thomas. b. England 1882. d. 1974. Member of British ILP before coming to NZ 1907. President Auckland branch Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and chairman Auckland District Council of NZF of L. 1910 joined Auckland Socialist Party and became its supervisor of literature. In 1912 married another Auckland socialist, Rhoda Aspin, and returned to England for a visit. Chairman Auckland Strike Committee 1913. Organiser NZF of L 1914 and subsequently President UF of L 1918. Secretary Auckland Carpenters' Union 1914–36. Longtime interest in guild socialism and rationalism. Prominent in formation of WEA in Auckland 1915–19. Taxation reformer and vice-president Auckland Land Values League. Also active in League of Nations Society and Economic Society of Australia and NZ. NZLP candidate Parnell 1919 and 1930 (by-election). Unsuccessful candidate Auckland City Council 1915 and Auckland mayoralty 1927 and 1929. Member Auckland City Council 1919–27, 1928–31 (Labour), 1931–38 (independent), 1953–68 (Citizens and Ratepayers). Also served on Auckland Electric Power Board, Auckland Drainage Board and Auckland Harbour Board, including a period as chairman of the latter. Broke with the Labour Party in 1930 after accepting a United Government appointment to the Workers' Compensation Committee, which had been boycotted by the Alliance of Labour. Member Legislative Council 1934–50.

BOSWELL, Charles Wallace. b. Coromandel 1886. d. 1956. MA University of NZ (Auckland). Schoolteacher and headmaster Kawakawa District High School 1935–38. Senior rugby and cricket player. Foundation member Auckland Fabian Club and helped form NZLP branches at Thames and Kawakawa. Chairman Bay of Islands LRC, Auckland president and NZ vice-president Assistant Masters' Association and president Bay of Islands branch NZ Educational Institute. Labour MP Bay of Islands 1938–43. NZ minister to Moscow 1944–49.

BRINDLE, Thomas. b. Manchester, England, 1878. d. 1950. Arrived NZ 1912. Had belonged to ILP in England. Waterside worker and onetime vice-president Wellington Waterside Workers' Union. Active member SDP. Imprisoned for sedition during anti-conscription campaign 1916. Was for a time manager Clarte Bookshop, Wellington. 1920 lost ballot for secretaryship NZLP but elected president 1922–26. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Gisborne 1919 and 1922, Nelson 1925, Wellington Suburbs 1928 and 1931. Wellington City Councillor 1933–41 and member Legislative Council 1936–49.

BURNETT, Charles Harris. b. Wanganui 1875. d. 1947. Educated Wanganui College. Farmer prominent in Wanganui and Rangitikei districts. Foundation member and first secretary Wanganui branch Farmers' Union, life member and executive Agricultural and Pastoral Association, crown tenants' representative on Wellington Land Board and twelve years a Wanganui Borough Councillor. Social Credit sympathies. Labour MP Tauranga 1935–38.

CAMPBELL, Archibald (Archie). b. Port Chalmers 1874. d. 1955. Waterside worker and secretary Port Chalmers Waterside Workers' Union from 1912. Labour MP Chalmers 1935–38. MLC 1939–50. Served on Otago Harbour Board.

CARR, Rev. Clyde Leonard. b. Auckland 1886. d. 1962. Educated Canterbury, Wellington and Auckland University Colleges. After five years in commerce and banking ordained 1915 as a Congregational minister. Served in churches in Fiji, Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. Chairman Auckland (1917 and 1918) and Canterbury (1920) districts of Congregational Union. Worked in publishing and as a radio announcer in Christchurch during 1920s and became member Christchurch City Council and hospital board. MP Timaru 1928–62. Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker House of Representatives 1946–50. President NZLP 1936–37 and vice-president 1933–34.

CHAPMAN, Charles Henry. b. London, England, 1876. d. 1957. Arrived NZ 1905. Joined British ILP 1893 and secretary London ILP Federation 1903–5. Attended international conference as ILP delegate 1896. Life member ILP. Linotype operator and union secretary (Wellington Typographers' Union). PLL candidate Wellington South 1908. President Wellington SDP 1913. SDP Advisory Committee 1915–16. NZLP candidate Hawke's Bay 1919 and 1922, Wellington Suburbs 1925. MP Wellington North 1928–46, Wellington Central 1946–51. Member Wellington City Council 1919–25, 1929–41, and also served on hospital, harbour, and technical college boards. Unsuccessful candidate Wellington mayoralty.

CHRISTIE, Hubert Maxwell (Max). b. Kaiapoi, 1889. d. 1982. Educated Kaiapoi Public School. At first a carpenter. Fought with NZEF World War I at Gallipoli and one of delegates to Wellington conference that formed the NZRSA. Shearer and member of shearers' unions in both NZ and Australia. Later farmer and woolbuyer at Porangahau. 1929–32 member Patangata County Council. Joined Waipukurau Branch NZLP May 1933. MP Waipawa 1935–38. Later served on many government boards and commissions, including Loans Board and Maori Trust Board. Foundation chairman NZ Wool Board.

COATES, Joseph Gordon. b. Matakohe 1878. d. 1943. Farmer and territorial army officer who served with NZEF in France during World War I with rank of major and won MC and bar. Elected to Otamatea County Council 1905. Elected to Parliament as an independent 1911 and after supporting Ward switched to Reform 1912 and remained Reform Party (later National Party). MP Kaipara until his death in 1943. Minister of Justice 1919–20, Postmaster General 1919–25, Minister of Public Works 1920–26, Minister of Native Affairs 1921–28 and Railways 1923–28. Prime Minister 1925, on death of W. F. Massey, until 1928. Leader of Opposition 1928–31. Minister of Public Works, Transport and Unemployment 1931–33 and Minister of Finance 1933–35 in coalition government headed by G. W. Forbes. Member War Cabinet 1940–43.

COLEMAN, David William. b. London, England, 1881. d. 1951. Arrived NZ 1902 after living as child and young man in Queensland, Australia. Carpenter and later furniture retailer. Secretary Poverty Bay Labourers' Union and Gisborne SDP 1914. Member of NZLP's first national executive and served on it for twenty-one years. Also president Gisborne LRC for twenty-one years. Mayor of Gisborne 1927–33, 1935–41, and also served many years as borough councillor and on hospital and fire boards and defence and repatriation committees. Labour candidate for Gisborne 1925, 1928. MP Gisborne 1931–49. Under-secretary for Works 1947–49.

COMBS, Harry Ernest. b. Napier 1881. d. 1954. Commenced work as post office messenger, becoming general secretary, Post and Telegraph Employees' Association 1916–26. Had been the association's national president 1909–11 and editor of its journal, *Katipo*, 1906–26. Secretary NZ Rugby Union 1919–26. Established in partnership a printing business 1926. Labour candidate Wellington North 1922, 1925. Organised for NZLP in Hawke's Bay 1928 election, Taranaki 1931 election. MP Wellington Suburbs 1938–46, Onslow 1946–54. Under-secretary for Finance 1948–49.

CONNELLY, Michael. b. Kakaramea 1887. d. 1970. West Coast miner and unionist who became secretary Thorndon branch of Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants 1914–18 and subsequently national president of the ASRS 1923–25. Member first directorate *Grey River Argus* after it became a Labour newspaper. Labour candidate Chalmers 1925. MLC 1936–50. Dunedin City Councillor 1944–47 and 1950–59. Unsuccessfully contested Dunedin mayoralty 1956. A son, Hon. Michael Aynsley Connelly, later became a Labour MP and cabinet minister.

CORNISH, Henry Havelock. b. Kaitangata 1887. d. 1952. Educated Otago Boys High School and Otago and Victoria University Colleges. MA, LLM. President Wellington District Law Society 1926. Professor of Law VUW 1930–50. KC 1934. Solicitor General 1934–45. Judge of Supreme Court 1945–50. Acted as advisor to and speech-writer for Savage 1936–40.

COTTERILL, Joseph Bernard Francis. b. Wanganui 1905. d. 1982. Painter in railway workshops. Wanganui hockey and rugby representative. President NZ Swimming Association 1957–59 and national selector 1960–62. Active sports administrator throughout life. Joined Labour Party 1928. Secretary of both Wanganui LRC 1935 and East Town branch ASRS 1930–35. Wanganui City Councillor 1935–38, member power board 1935–38, and harbour board 1944–47. MP Wanganui 1935–60, winning the seat at twenty-nine years of age and retiring at the age of fifty-four. Served for many years as the caucus whip.

COULTER, Robert, b. Christchurch 1891. d. 1945. Settled Te Aroha 1904 and later became shopkeeper. Mayor of Te Aroha for fourteen years and also longtime member and chairman of the Thames Harbour Board. President Northern Athletic Union for sixteen years. Labour MP Waikato 1935–38 and 1943–45. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Hauraki 1938.

CULLEN, Edward Luttrell. b. Havelock North 1896. d. 1963. Farmer at Wairoa and Nuhaka. Director Wairoa Co-op Dairy Co. Ltd and active in assisting Maoris and returned soldiers to become farmers. Served NZEF World War I as sergeant for three years, winning Military Medal. Labour candidate Hawke's Bay 1931. Labour MP Hawke's Bay 1935–46, Hastings 1946–49. Minister of Agriculture 1946–49.

DAVIS, Sir Ernest Hyam. b. Nelson 1872. d. 1962. Managing director Hancock and Co., brewers, wine and spirit merchants, and hoteliers, later known as New Zealand Breweries Ltd. Also involved in other business activities. Yachtsman and race-horse owner. Mayor of Newmarket 1909–11 and Auckland 1935–41. Auckland City Councillor 1915–20 and 1921–23, and served three terms on Auckland Hospital Board. President Auckland Savings Bank. A millionaire who from 1912 until his death was a very generous financial supporter of the Labour Party. His brother, Eliot Rypinski Davis, gave financial support to the Reform and National Parties. A ruthless businessman, benefactor of worthy causes, and with an eye for the opposite sex. Savage's employer for most of the period 1908–19. Knighted 1937.

DAVIS, George. b. England 1876. d. 1937. Came to NZ as a child. Secretary Auckland Drivers' Union 1899–1937. Active in Auckland branches of the PLL 1908 and the first NZLP 1910–11 and unsuccessful Labour candidate for Auckland East at 1910 by-election. Unsuccessful candidate for Auckland City Council 1907, 1909, 1913, 1921, and Labour member of the council 1919–21, 1921 (by-election)–1923 and 1927–29. Chairman of the Auckland LRC, of which Savage was secretary, in 1919, when Davis was the unsuccessful Labour candidate for Roskill.

DENHAM, William Mortimer Clarence. b. Australia 1887. d. 1969. Arrived NZ 1907. Tramway worker and farmer. Invercargill Borough Council 1926. Labour candidate Awarua 1928, Invercargill 1931. MP Invercargill 1935–46. Later active in establishing trust hotels in Invercargill and chairman Invercargill Savings Bank.

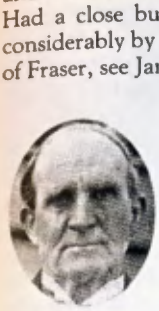
DREAVER, Mrs Mary Manson (née Bain). b. Dunedin 1887. d. 1961. Journalist, speech teacher, artist and minister of National Spiritualist Church of NZ, of which she was also president. Interest in astrology. Wrote for *Women's Weekly* under name of 'Maorilander'. Broadcast as 'Aunt Maisy' frequently on Radio 1ZB's 'Happiness Club'. Became president Auckland women's branch 1926, vice-president Savage's Auckland West Branch 1930, later active in many other branches and Auckland LRC. Member Auckland City Council 1938–44 and 1953–61, hospital board, transport board, power board and drainage board. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Remuera 1938 and Waitemata 1943. MP Waitemata 1941–43. Member Legislative Council 1946–50.

FAGAN, Mark. b. Tasmania, Australia, 1874. d. 1947. Miner in Tasmania, Queensland, NSW, Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria. Arrived NZ about 1900. Miner Reefton district. Secretary Inangahua Miners' Union sixteen years. Member NZ Federation of Labour Executive 1910–13. Responsible for promotion Miners' Phthisis Act 1915. Chairman Inangahua Hospital Board, and active in St Johns Ambulance Association and local trotting and cricket clubs. Labour candidate Motueka 1925. Shifted to Petone and secretary Nash's campaign committee 1929 Hutt by-election. Member Legislative Council 1930–47. Cabinet minister without portfolio and leader of Legislative Council 1936–39, when he became Speaker of the Council. A kindly man and a close friend of Savage and Webb.

FORBES, George William. b. Lyttelton 1869. d. 1947. Became farmer 1893 after seven years working in father's Lyttelton hardware store. Captained Canterbury rugby representative team. MP Hurunui (Liberal, National, United, National) 1908–43 after contesting the seat unsuccessfully in 1902. 1912–28 Liberal Whip. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Lands and Agriculture 1928–30. Prime Minister 1930–35.

FRASER, Peter (Pat). b. Scotland 1884. d. 1950. Strict Presbyterian upbringing. Member Rosshire County Radical and Liberal Association. Became a socialist after reading Blatchford's *Britain for the British*. Joined Independent Labour Party in London 1907. Arrived NZ 1910. President Auckland General Labourers' Union during disastrous 1911–12 strike, which split the union and decimated its membership. Became secretary Auckland branch NZF of L 1912 and active during 1912 Waihi miners' strike. Active in Auckland Socialist Party 1911–13. National secretary SDP 1913–15. Wellington waterside worker after SDP ran out of money. Imprisoned 1917 for twelve months for sedition during anti-conscription campaign. Very active in WEA and self-educated

to an impressive degree in poetry, philosophy, the classics, history, and religion. Puritanical in moral matters and particularly detested sexual jokes or comments. Not a courageous pioneering leader but extremely astute and adept at discerning where the majority was forming on an issue and making himself one of its leaders. Could be cruel in his personal relationships with colleagues. Won by-election for Wellington Central 1918 and Labour MP for that seat 1918–46 and Brooklyn 1946–50. Wellington City Councillor 1919–23, 1933–36, and also on harbour board. Vice-president NZLP 1919–20 and president 1920–21. Deputy leader NZLP 1933–35. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Health and Marine 1935–40. Prime Minister 1940–49. Had a close but strange working relationship with F. P. Walsh. Also influenced considerably by his very intelligent, alert and determined wife, Janet. For biographies of Fraser, see James Thorn, *Peter Fraser*, and Michael King's forthcoming biography.



FRENCH, Alfred James (Alf). b. Devonshire, England, 1865. d. 1946. British navy marine bandmaster and an excellent flute player. Came to NZ 1894 on ill-fated *Wairarapa*, wrecked at Great Barrier Island. Involved in the rescue of a girl. Went to gold mines at Waihi and then established a coal business at Karangahake. Moved to Auckland 1907 and became stereotyper at *Auckland Star* after working as a labourer on construction of Grafton Bridge. Alf and Elizabeth French and Savage lived together from 1908 until Savage's death.

FRENCH, Elizabeth Mary (née Seivright). b. Thames 1877. d. 1943. Father a mining engineer killed in mine accident at Thames. Maternal uncle mayor of Te Aroha (Tom Stanley). Married Alf French 1898. Two children: Cecil Robert (Bob) French (b. 1900, d. 1976) and Aruba French, later Mrs Alfrey (b. 1906). Never very strong and suffered from high blood-pressure. Left speechless and paralysed by stroke (the first of five) 1929 though partially recovered.

FROST, Rev. Frederick Ledger. b. Northumberland, England, 1887. d. 1957. Coal-miner from thirteen to twenty-four years of age in Britain and Australia. Came to NZ about 1911 and worked Millerton mines before becoming a Methodist minister. After serving sixteen months in the front line in Europe during World War I as a soldier in the 1st Otago Tunnelling Corps, became a chaplain-captain and wounded 1918. 1919–22 Methodist City Missioner in Auckland and then church appointments in Stratford, Dunedin, Edendale, Lyttelton, Auckland and Tauranga. Changed to Church of England after fourteen years in Methodist ministry in 1924 and became vicar at Taradale 1926–35. President Taradale RSA 1927–34 and member Hawke's Bay Education Board and Napier High School Board 1931–35. Labour candidate New Plymouth 1931 and 1935. Worked in broadcasting and head office Labour Dept 1936–38. Labour MP New Plymouth 1938–43.

HAMILTON, Adam. b. Southland 1880. d. 1952. Father a Scottish miner at Gabriel's Gully gold rush of 1862 who later went farming. Primary education and then became farmer. At age twenty-five went to Dunedin Technical College and then completed arts degree at Otago University College. Then three years at Knox Theological College qualifying for Presbyterian ministry but on graduation started grain and seed merchant business at Winton 1912. Sold business 1919 to Southland Farmers Co-operative Association, of which Hamilton later became chairman of directors. MP for Wallace 1919–22, 1925–46. Minister of Labour and Internal Affairs in Coalition Government 1931–35. Leader of National Party Opposition 1936–40. Member War Cabinet 1940–44.

HEFFRON, Robert James (Bob). b. Thames 1890. d. 1978. Son of Irish Catholic migrants. Worked in gold-treating plant and studied metallurgy after leaving school. Went to USA 1909 and worked as mule driver and labourer. Returned to NZ 1912 and active in Waihi strike. Moved to Auckland and became secretary Auckland Labourers' Union. Active in Socialist Party and as a proselytising rationalist. Foundation secretary-treasurer Auckland District Council UF of L 1914–15, when he became its vice-president. Succeeded Savage as secretary Auckland LRC 1917 when Savage became LRC president. Active in WEA and anti-conscription activities. Drawn in conscription ballot 1917, failed to report, and warrant issued for arrest. According to *Maoriland Worker* (21 Sept. 1921), Heffron 'dodged the body-snatchers during the war by unostentatiously departing for Australia per coal bunker'. In Melbourne organised for Clothing Trade Union and joined Victorian Socialist Party. Moved to Sydney and secretary NSW Marine Stewards' Union 1921–30. Arrested for alleged conspiracy Port Lyttelton strike 1925 but discharged. Active in ALP. Expelled for opposing Lang machine 1936, readmitted to ALP 1937, led breakaway group 1938. ALP member of Legislative Assembly for Botany 1930–50 and Maroubra 1950–68. Minister National Emergency Services 1941–44, Education 1944–60, Deputy Premier NSW 1952–59, Premier 1959–64.

HERRING, Horace Edgar. b. England 1884. d. 1961. Mechanical engineer and draughtsman educated at University of London and City of Guilds' College London and worked as marine engineer at Yarrow shipyards. Came to NZ 1909. Farming, sawmilling, and engineer at Karangahake mines and Auckland Tramway Board before becoming lecturer in mechanical engineering at Seddon Memorial Technical College, Auckland. 1927–35 lecturer-in-charge of all trades instruction Ashburton Technical High School. Labour MP Mid-Canterbury 1935–38 and during that time a consistent supporter of Lee. Clearly accepted Social Credit views. Later technical assistant to chief engineer Housing Department and private-hotel owner at Levin, where he was mayor 1953–56. Widely read in history and literature, especially Carlyle and Dickens. During World War II was national secretary of the Aid to Russia Society. DLP National Executive member 1940–43 and DLP candidate Christchurch East by-election 1943.

HICKEY, Patrick Hodgens. b. Waimea South 1882. d. 1930. Influenced by his Irish Catholic background and later by his membership of the IWW-influenced Western Federation of Miners in the United States (Colorado), which he joined in 1905. Member Blackball Miners' Union at time of 1908 strike and with Webb and Semple helped establish NZ Federation of Labour, becoming its first secretary in 1908. Socialist Party candidate Ohinemuri 1911. Secretary UF of L 1913 and secretary of the committee that organised the July 1913 congress that established the SDP. Went to Australia 1915 and became an organiser for the Victorian Railways Union 1917–19. Member Victorian Socialist Party 1916–19 and vice-president Victorian executive ALP 1918. Editor Queensland Railways Union paper 1919–20. Active opponent of conscription in Australia. Returned to NZ 1920 and editor *Maoriland Worker* August 1920 to May 1921 before moving to Auckland and starting a printing business. President Auckland Rationalist Association 1924. Published pamphlet *'Red Fed' Memoirs* in 1925 and in same year defeated as Labour candidate for Invercargill by Sir Joseph Ward. Went to Melbourne 1926 and became president Melbourne Metropolitan Council Labour Party. Described by close friends as a big man with a rugged, granite-like exterior and an aggressive, non-compromising personality, 'a good hater of what and whom he despised [but] as a friend he was one for life.' A talented organiser and fluent, pugnacious speaker, Hickey was selected for safe Labour seat of Dandenong in 1930 but died in January of the same year just before the election.

HODGENS, Joseph, b. Nelson 1886. d. 1955. Builder. Relative of P. H. Hickey. Resided in Palmerston North from 1908. Secretary Carpenters' Union. Palmerston North Borough Councillor 1919–21, 1923–38, and member Manawatu-Oroua Power Board 1925–41, 1947–55, and Palmerston North Hospital Board 1933–55. Labour candidate Palmerston North 1931. MP Palmerston North 1935–46. Very strong supporter of Savage.

HOLLAND, Henry Edmund (Harry). b. New South Wales 1868. d. 1933. Arrived NZ 1912. A printer and journalist who came into trade union and socialist activities after being a street preacher with the Salvation Army. Imprisoned in Australia for libel 1896 and sedition 1909. Foundation and central executive member NSW Labor Electoral League (later renamed Political Labor League) during 1890s. In 1901 helped organise and became president of the Sydney tailoresses' union. Active in Australasian Socialist Federation (secretary 1909) and editor of *International Socialist Review* and *International Socialist*, among other papers. In 1911 Holland's health broke down as a result of prison and overwork and in May 1912 he accepted an invitation from the Waihi Socialist Party to come to NZ as a lecturer and organiser and concurrently recuperate at the Te Aroha mineral baths. Took an active interest in the Waihi strike and collaborated with F. E. O'Flynn ('Ballot Box') and R. S. Ross in writing the very effective partisan pamphlet *The Tragic Story of the Waihi Strike*. In April 1913 became editor of *Maoriland Worker* and held the post until May 1918. Late 1913 imprisoned for sedition during the general strike of that year. One of a committee of seven who drafted the constitution and programme of the NZLP at the July 1916 Unity Conference. SDP candidate Wellington North 1914 and NZLP candidate for the same seat at 1918 by-election. MP for Grey 1918–19 and Buller 1919–33. Leader of the parliamentary Labour Party 1918–33. A prolific pamphleteer and also wrote poetry. For a full biography, see P. J. O'Farrell, *Harry Holland. Militant Socialist*.

HOWARD, Edwin John (Ted or Teddy). b. Bristol, England, 1868. d. 1939. Seaman who arrived in New Zealand for the first time 1887–88 via Australia. Returned to Australia and became foreman of smelter in iron works and studied at Adelaide School of Mines. Gold prospector in central Australia. Returned to NZ about 1902 but after death of his wife in 1903 shifted back to Australia. In 1905 settled permanently in New Zealand. Unemployed for a long time. Secretary Christchurch branch PLL 1905–8 and then transferred his allegiance to the Socialist Party, becoming its national president 1912. Chairman of directors *Maoriland Worker* 1913–15 and wrote newspaper columns for various papers under the pseudonyms of 'The Vag' and 'Uncle Ted'. Longtime secretary Canterbury General Labourers' Union and first secretary Christchurch WEA 1915, becoming its librarian 1918. Christchurch City Councillor 1917 and 1923–25. Socialist Party candidate Christchurch South 1911. MP Christchurch South 1919–39. Became Labour's caucus whip in 1919 and Chairman of Committees in House of Representatives 1936–38. One of his daughters, Hon. Mabel Howard, later became a Labour MP and cabinet minister.

HULTQUIST, Axel Gordon (Gordon). b. Western Australia 1904. d. 1941 (Crete). Electrician. Son of a Swedish Salvation Army officer. Arrived NZ 1908. Educated Hamilton High School and Seddon Memorial Technical College, Auckland. After working as an electrician in Christchurch, where he joined the Avon branch NZLP, returned to Auckland and became foreman with Allum Electrical Co. Executive member Auckland Electrical Workers' Union. Winner Auckland Athenaeum Society's gold medal for oratory 1933. President and secretary Auckland T and LC. President Grey Lynn branch NZLP, which he joined in 1928, and chairman of J. A. Lee's campaign committee 1931 election. Labour MP Bay of Plenty 1935–41. A territorial soldier who volunteered for Army (a signals lieutenant) on outbreak of war in 1939.

HUNTER, Clifford Lowrie (Lowrie). b. Waimea West 1900. Father a Nelson butcher and orchardist, and active supporter of the independent MP for Nelson, Harry Atmore. Flax- and scrub-cutting after leaving school. Moved to Wellington about 1920 and became tram motorman and member of NZLP. Longtime secretary Island Bay branch. Active in WEA. Became president Wellington Tramways' Union, vice-president Tramways Federation, and Dominion Councillor Alliance of Labour. 1931 intended standing for Wairarapa but at request of Nash switched to Manawatu. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Manawatu 1931 and 1938. Labour MP Manawatu 1935–38. Conciliation Commissioner in Auckland 1941–69.

HUNTER, George Robert. b. Victoria, Australia, 1884. d. 1949. Miner at Rutherglen, where he knew Savage and Webb. On North Prentice school committee with Savage, co-founder with Savage and Webb of North Prentice branch PLL 1904 and a miners' book club, and with Savage et al. helped build North Prentice hall. Came to NZ 1908 and joined Webb at Denniston, Blackball and Runanga. Secretary State Coal Miners' Union 1910 and later town clerk of Runanga for seven years. Associated with Webb in co-operative mining in Buller district and 1929 moved with Webb to Christchurch and together they formed Point Elizabeth Coal Depot. Member Christchurch City Council. Bred and raced horses. Member Legislative Council 1936–49.

JEFFERY, Cecil Albert. b. Clyde 1888. d. 1966. Worked for Post and Telegraph Department in Central Otago and Wellington 1903–14. 1915 private secretary to Minister of Munitions, Supplies and Customs. Served overseas in NZEF World War I. 1919 private secretary Minister of Internal Affairs. 1920–26 Prime Minister's secretarial staff. 1926 became chief private secretary to Prime Minister and subsequently served Coates, Ward, Forbes, Savage and Fraser. 1935 appointed to additional post of secretary to the cabinet. 1943 became permanent head of the Prime Minister's Department.

JONES, Frederick. b. Dunedin 1885. d. 1966. Bootclicker and Otago trade union leader. Active in PLL, first NZLP, ULP, and Dunedin LRC formed 1914. President Otago Trades and Labour Council 1916 and chaired the meeting at which a new Dunedin LRC affiliated to NZLP was formed. Served three terms as president of both Otago T and LC and Otago LRC and also president Dunedin WEA. Member NZLP National Executive for seven years. Dunedin City Councillor 1933–38, 1950–58, including a term as deputy mayor 1935–38. Unsuccessfully contested mayoralty for Labour 1929. Also served on Otago Hospital and Harbour Boards. MP Dunedin South 1931–46 and St Kilda 1946–51. Minister of Defence 1935–49 and Postmaster General 1935–40. High Commissioner to Australia 1958–60.

JORDAN, Sir William Joseph (Bill). b. Kent, England, 1879. d. 1959. London policeman. Migrated to NZ 1904. Farmer then house-painter at Ngaruawahia, where he served as a borough councillor. Served in NZEF World War I and severely wounded 1918. Joined PLL in Wellington 1907, the ULP in Wanganui 1912, and the SDP at Ngaruawahia and Huntly 1913. President NZLP 1932–33. Methodist home missionary. Very much a Christian Socialist and often independent in outlook and action. A close friend of Savage. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Raglan 1919. MP for Manukau 1922–36. High Commissioner in London 1936–51. NZ representative on Council of League of Nations 1936–39 and president of council 1938. Knighted 1952.

KELLIHER, Sir Henry Joseph. b. Clyde, Central Otago, 1896. Gassed in France while serving with NZ forces in World War I. After war engaged in land deals, exported farm products, and imported and distributed whisky and other merchandise. Acquired wholesale wine and spirits business in 1926 and in 1930 absorbed Waitemata Brewery Ltd, which grew into the huge brewing and hotel company Dominion Breweries Ltd. Had to face strong opposition from Sir Ernest Davis's NZ Breweries. A life-long student of economics and advocate of monetary reform, published and edited influential Auckland weekly the *Mirror*, and author of *New Zealand at the Cross-roads* (1936). Founder of the League of Health of New Zealand Youth 1934 to advocate the establishment of a free milk scheme for school children. Director Bank of New Zealand 1936–44. After 1938 developed Puketutu Island as home and stud farm for cattle and race-horses. A generous philanthropist and patron of the arts, with a special interest in representational landscape painting. Retired as managing director of Dominion Breweries in 1982.

LANGSTONE, Frank. b. Bulls 1881. d. 1969. Family deserted by father and Langstone became orphan at eleven when mother died. Shearer involved in organising Shearers' Union in the King Country and associated with foundation of *Maoriland Worker* 1910. Later ran a railway restaurant at Taumarunui. A colourful orator who, however, often did not finish long, involved sentences. President NZLP 1933–34. A monetary reformer from early 1920s, when he became influenced by the ideas of Major C. H. Douglas. Labour candidate Waimarino 1919. MP Waimarino 1922–25, 1928–46 and Roskill 1946–49. Minister of Lands and Forests 1935–41, sent to Washington to set up NZ legation 1941, and for a short time in 1942 was first NZ High Commissioner to Canada before resigning after violent argument with Peter Fraser. Unsuccessfully contested 1949 election in Roskill after resignation from NZLP as independent Labour and anti-compulsory military training candidate. Social Credit candidate for Roskill 1957 and 1960.

LEE, John Alexander (Jack), b. Dunedin 1891. d. 1982. Sent to Burnham Industrial School 1906 after second conviction for theft. Later escaped and worked on farms, in stores, as flaxworker. Imprisoned for twelve months in Mount Eden gaol in 1912 for breaking and entering after period smuggling liquor into the King Country. Enlisted NZEF 1916. Won DCM for 'fearless gallantry' at Messines 1917. Undoubtedly a courageous, even foolhardy, man. Wounded and lost left arm at Mailly Maillet 1918. Joined NZLP 1919 and by 1920 chairman Auckland LRC. Also served on executive of Auckland RSA. Brilliant orator and an artist in both the spoken and written word. Unsuccessful

Labour candidate Auckland East by-election 1921. MP Auckland East 1922–28 and Grey Lynn 1931–43, the last three years as a DLP member after his expulsion from the NZLP in 1940. Managed Palace Hotel, Rotorua, after his defeat in 1928 and later established several money-lending companies. Parliamentary under-secretary 1936–39 responsible for state housing scheme. A monetary reformer. Formed Democratic Labour Party 1940 and led it in 1943 elections. Unsuccessful candidate Grey Lynn 1943 and again in 1949, when he opposed compulsory military training. Successful bookselling business in later years. Published and edited *John A. Lee's Weekly*. Author of numerous books and pamphlets, notably *Children of the Poor* (1934), *The Hunted* (1936), *Civilian into Soldier* (1937), *Socialism in New Zealand* (1938), *Shining with the Shiner* (1944), and *Simple on a Soapbox* (1963). Through his long life a dogmatic and egotistical man but certainly not without charm. For a full biography of Lee, see Erik Olssen, *John A. Lee*.

LOWRY, Leonard George. b. London, England, 1884. d. 1947. Arrived NZ 1906. Employed by Wellington City Council. Served NZEF World War I. Became bookseller and stationer in Otaki 1918. Served on Otaki Borough Council and as president NZ Booksellers' Association. Late Labour nominee for Otaki seat 1935 after originally selected candidate withdrew. MP Otaki 1935–46.

LYON, William John (Jack). b. England 1898. d. 1941. Educated at a grammar school in Brighton from which he won a scholarship to Oxford University but did not take it up because of outbreak of war. Served British army World War I and for some time afterwards, enlisting at age of seventeen and becoming NCO and then officer in Royal Sussex Regt (claimed to be a major in military intelligence). Health damaged by mustard gas while on Western Front. Twice mentioned in despatches. After war worked as linguist and cypher translator in the Foreign Office. Member for three years Mitcham branch Labour Party in England and party organiser 1921 and 1924 elections. Because of poor health left London and arrived NZ 1927. Became a 'vulcaniser' in Hastings. Joined NZLP 1928. Elected to Hastings Borough Council and Napier Harbour Board 1929. Shifted to Auckland 1931 and became president of the Auckland Provincial Unemployed Workers' Association and president Auckland Association Football Association. MP Waitemata 1935–41. Enlisted in NZ army as captain at outbreak of World War II and fought in Greece before being killed during the battle for Crete while commanding a company of the 18th Rifle Battalion.

McCOMBS, Elizabeth Reid (née Henderson). b. Kaiapoi 1876. d. 1935. Social worker. President and dominion treasurer Women's Christian Temperance Union and Secretary Children's Aid Society. Married James McCombs 1903. Two children, Terence and Patricia. Executive Canterbury Progressive Liberal Association. Christchurch City Councillor 1921–35 and also served on North Canterbury Hospital Board and Christchurch Tramways Board. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Kaiapoi 1928 and Christchurch North 1931. MP Lyttelton 1933–35, the first woman elected to the NZ Parliament. Supported in 1933 by feminists of all political persuasions, e.g. Mrs T.E. Taylor and Miss Ellen Melville.

McCOMBS, James (Jimmy). b. Ireland 1873. d. 1933. Came to NZ as child 1876. Studied for Anglican ministry but gave up theological studies to devote himself to social work. Prominent Canterbury prohibitionist and very active in Church of England Men's Society. Member Progressive Liberal Association and organised campaigns for the Liberal MPs H. G. Ell and T. E. Taylor. A draper and president Drapers Assistants' Union. Independent candidate Christchurch East 1908. Independent Liberal-Labour candidate Avon 1911, polling 2817 votes to the official NZLP candidate's 798 on the first ballot. Won Lyttelton as SDP candidate 1913 by-election and held seat until death in 1933. Chairman of board of *Maoriland Worker* 1915–16. One of committee of seven that drafted the constitution and programme of the NZLP at the July 1916 conference and elected the party's first president. Resigned presidency and membership of the Labour Party over state control of liquor issue 1917 but rejoined some months later. Lost the leadership of the parliamentary party caucus to H. E. Holland on the toss of a coin in 1918 after each received three votes. Christchurch City Councillor 1913–17 and 1931–33. Throughout period in Parliament one of Labour's two or three top spokesmen on finance.

McCOMBS, Sir Terence Henderson (Terry). b. Christchurch 1905. d. 1982. Educated Waitaki Boys' High School, Canterbury University College (MSc), Christchurch Teachers' College. Represented Canterbury University at hockey and rowing. Won national postgraduate research scholarship in chemistry, three years research on own, and then taught at the Christchurch Technical College and for a short time (1934–35) at Seddon Memorial Technical College, Auckland. MP Lyttelton 1935–51, first winning the seat early in 1935 at a by-election after the death of his mother, who had succeeded her husband two years before. Much younger and brighter than most other children in his class throughout schooling and unpopular because of his parents' political views on prohibition and conscription. Regarded himself as a 'loner' for most of his early life and did not join any of the factions on entering Parliament. Under-secretary for Finance 1945–47 and Minister of Education and Scientific and Industrial Research 1947–49. Returned to teaching after defeat 1951 and did not seek re-election because became a solo parent with four school-age children after death of his wife in 1952. Headmaster Cashmere High School, Christchurch, 1956–73. NZ High Commissioner in UK and Ambassador to Ireland 1973–75. Knighted 1975. Chairman of Committee into Secondary Education 1975–76. University of Canterbury Council 1956–73 (chancellor 1969–73), Board of Governors Canterbury University College 1937–48 and Canterbury Agricultural College 1939–44. Member Senate University of NZ 1960–61. Christchurch City Councillor 1950–56, 1977–82, and member Lyttelton Harbour Board 1938–47.

McINTOSH, Sir Alister Donald. b. Picton 1906. d. 1978. MA Victoria University of Wellington and later studied at University of Michigan on a Carnegie Travelling Fellowship. Hon LLD Canterbury University 1965. Assistant General Assembly Library 1926–34. Prime Minister's Department 1935–66. Secretary War Cabinet 1943–45. Permanent head Prime Minister's Department 1945–66. Secretary External Affairs 1943–66. NZ ambassador to Rome 1966–70. Chairman Broadcasting Council. KMG 1973. Helped with research and writing of Savage's speeches 1936–40 while head of the information section of the PM's Department.

McKEEN, Robert. b. Edinburgh, Scotland, 1884. d. 1974. Grocer's assistant in co-operative stores before coming to NZ 1909. Worked on West Coast in mines and active in miners' union. Moved to Wellington and became secretary grocers assistants', match factory employees', and brewery workers' unions. Secretary Wellington LRC and Wellington City Councillor. Labour MP Wellington South 1922–54. Chief whip 1935–39. Deputy speaker 1939–47 and Speaker House of Representatives 1947–50. Mayor of Otaki for six years after retirement from Parliament.

McLAGAN, Angus (Gus). b. Midlothian, Scotland, 1891. d. 1956. Pit boy from age fourteen. Arrived NZ 1911. A West Coast miner who strenuously opposed the early Labour Party. General secretary NZ Communist Party 1926 and chairman 1928. Left Communist Party 1929 after refusing to accept party directives in union affairs. Secretary United Mine-workers' Union 1927–46. President NZF of L 1937 (formation)–46. Ally of Peter Fraser, Paddy Webb and Fintan Patrick Walsh. Vehemently anti-communist in later life. MLC 1942–46 and leader of the Legislative Council 1944–46. MP Riccarton 1946–56. Minister of Industrial Manpower and National Service 1942–46 and Minister of Labour 1946–49. Suffered from effects of rheumatic fever for last thirty years of his life. In February 1954, though ill in hospital, persuaded Walsh to use his influence to support Nash at a time when it seemed certain that the Labour Caucus was going to replace Nash with Nordmeyer. A dour, direct, unbending and tenacious man. One of the 'strong men' of both industrial and political Labour movements. A deep thinker with firm views and very able.

McMILLAN, Dr David Gervan ('Doc', 'Mac', or Gervan). b. New Plymouth 1904. d. 1951. Dux Stratford District High School. Had an almost photographic memory and was a voracious reader. Graduated MB ChB Otago University College 1928. With Ethel Black, later to become his wife, regular attenders at Knox Presbyterian Church when students. Very concerned with health of elderly people. After graduation became medical officer of the Waitaki Hydro Medical Association at Kurow, where Rev. Arnold Nordmeyer was the Presbyterian minister. Practised at Kurow 1928–34 and developed health insurance scheme. First interested in NZLP in 1923 while a student in Dunedin, joined Kurow branch 1931, and became secretary Waitaki LRC. Wrote three pamphlets: *The New Zealand Legion* (1933), *Humanity and Christianity* (1935), and *A National Health Service* (n.d. (1935)). Dunedin City Councillor 1935–51 (deputy mayor at time of his death) and member Otago Hospital Board 1938–51 (chairman 1943–47). Unsuccessful Labour candidate Dunedin mayoralty 1941. MP Dunedin West 1935–43, winning the seat in 1935 by defeating the redoubtable W. Downie Stewart. Minister of Marine, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, and Prisons 1940–41. Vice-president NZLP 1940–42. Chairman of Health Committee of House of Representatives and committees for investigation into national health insurance scheme and abortion and maternity services. Resigned from cabinet and Parliament after being given a maximum of seven years to live after a heart condition was diagnosed. Wanted to spend time with young family and provide for them financially. Very positive, even dogmatic, in his beliefs and antagonised his fellow doctors.

McMILLAN, Ethel Emma née Black. b. Gisborne 1904. Dux of Gisborne High School. MA in History Otago University College, where she became a hockey blue and an assistant lecturer. Taught at Nelson Girls College 1927–29 before marrying Dr D. G.

McMillan and moving to Kurow. Executive member of many organisations such as Plunket and the NZ Library Association, and served long terms on Dunedin City Council, the Otago Hospital Board and the Otago High School Board of Governors. Won by-election for Dunedin North 1953 and Labour MP Dunedin North 1953–75.

MANN, Thomas. b. Warwickshire, England, 1856. d. Yorkshire, England, 1941. Son of a colliery clerk. Mother died when two years old. Three years schooling and started work in mines at ten years of age. 1870 moved to Birmingham and became apprentice engineer. Strong prohibitionist and evangelical Christian. 1876 moved to London and became clerk on docks. 1879–84 engineering jobs and also visited Paris and New York before taking job at Tilbury Docks. Influenced by writings of Henry George. In 1885 joined Social Democratic Federation and active in Amalgamated Society of Engineers and eight-hour-day campaign. 1889 was one of the leaders of the London dock strike and thereafter prominent proponent of socialism and new unionism. President London Dockers' Union. Served on Royal Commission on Labour 1891–94. Became active in Fabian Society and first secretary of the Independent Labour Party. Unsuccessful candidate Colne Valley 1895, North Aberdeen 1896, Halifax 1897. Launched General Workers' Union 1898. Arrived New Zealand 21 January 1902. Travelled widely throughout New Zealand for eight months as lecturer-organiser addressing meetings for NZ Socialist Party. Moved to Melbourne September 1902 and became organiser for Victorian Political Labor Council. Visited mining towns, country towns and shearers' camps. Among those directly converted to socialism and activated in support of the PLC by Mann were M. J. Savage and P. C. Webb. Mann resigned as PLC organiser 1905 and in 1906 formed in Melbourne the Social Questions Committee, which became the Victorian Socialist Party, many of whose members, after the break with the PLC in 1907, were to move into the Australian Communist Party. Also edited VSP paper the *Socialist*. Mann revisited NZ for two months in April-May 1908 and attended the NZ Socialist Party Easter Conference in Wellington. Mann left Australia on 30 December 1909 to return to England, where he launched a journal, the *Industrial Syndicalist*, and helped form the National Transport Workers' Federation and the National Union of Railwaymen. After being imprisoned in 1912 and revisiting South Africa and the USA, Mann in 1918 became general secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and in 1920 joined the British Communist Party. Over the next twenty years he visited the USSR four times and also China.

MARTIN, Bernard. b. England, 1882. d. 1956. Arrived NZ 1900. Worked for eight years in Taranaki butter factories before moving to Auckland and later becoming secretary Auckland Brewery Workers' Union from 1913 and Coach Workers' Union from 1917. Member first NZLP executive 1916, secretary Auckland Anti-Conscription League 1916, Auckland WEA, and League of Nations Association, and subsequently president of Auckland Fabian Club and Auckland LRC 1928–29, 1930–34. Auckland City Councillor 1931–33, 1935–38. Deputy mayor 1935–38. MLC 1936–50, Chairman of Committees 1939–48, and Speaker Legislative Council 1948–50. Regarded throughout his career as an excellent chairman. Member Council of Auckland University College 1936–56.

MARTIN, Frederick E. b. London 1894. d. ____Clerk and studied economics at Regent Street Polytechnic. Executive officer Clerks' Union and joined British Labour Party 1918. Arrived NZ 1920. Tramway worker and vice-president Auckland Tramways Union. Secretary Auckland District Council Alliance of Labour. Active in Grey Lynn branch NZLP. Secretary Auckland LRC 1930–36. Mt Albert Borough Councillor.

MARTIN, William Lee (Lee). b. Oamaru 1870, d. 1950. Painter and secretary Wanganui Painters' Union 1909–12. Became dairy farmer at Matangi in the Waikato 1912 and later president Waikato Farmers' Union 1925–27 and member of Auckland provincial executive of Farmers' Union. Officer in Salvation Army on West Coast and elsewhere and later a lay-preacher in the Methodist Church. North Island Grand President of the Druids Lodge. Member Central Waikato Electric Power Board 1920–38. Active in WEA and League of Nations Union. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Hamilton 1925. Labour MP for Raglan 1927–31 (elected at by-election, re-elected 1928 election, defeated 1931) and 1935–40 (resigned on health grounds). Minister of Agriculture 1935–40. MLC 1946–50.

MASON, Henry Greathead Rex (Rex). b. Wellington 1885. d. 1975. Dux Wellington College 1902. Graduated BA 1906, MA (Hons) in Maths and Physics 1907, LLB 1910, Victoria University College, Wellington. Solicitor 1909 and barrister 1923. Commenced law practice at Pukekohe 1911. Mayor of Pukekohe 1915–19. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Manukau 1919, Eden 1922 and 1925. Won Eden in 1926 by-election and MP Eden, Auckland Suburbs, Waitakere, and New Lynn 1926–66. President NZLP 1931–32. Attorney General and Minister of Justice 1935–49 and 1957–60, Education 1940–47, Native Affairs 1943–46, Health 1957–60. CMG and Hon. LLD (Victoria University of Wellington) both 1967.

MASSEY, William Ferguson. b. Londonderry, Ireland, 1856. d. 1925. Arrived NZ 1870 to join his father on farm at Tamaki. Became president of Mangere Farmers' Club and provincial leader of the Auckland Agricultural Association before in 1894 winning the Waitemata seat as a candidate opposed to the Liberal-Labour Government led by R. J. Seddon. MP for Waitemata 1894–96 and Franklin 1896–1925. Became in 1903 Leader of the Opposition, which in 1909 began to call itself the Reform Party. Prime Minister 1912–25, including 1915–18 wartime National Government, which included the Liberals led by Sir Joseph Ward.

MAWHETE, Rangi (William Moffatt). b. ____ d. 1961. Grandson of Rangitane chief Te Aweawe. Educated Te Aute College. Land and estate agent and interpreter Palmerston North. Independent candidate in Western Maori 1922. Organised first formal meeting between Labour Party and Maoris at Parewanui Pa, Bulls, 1924. Labour candidate Western Maori 1925. Helped bring Ratana and Labour together in meeting 1931. Organised Maori Labour conference 1932. In 1935 warned against an exclusive Ratana-Labour alliance that would divide rather than unite Maoris. Member Legislative Council 1936–50. Became chairman Labour's Maori Organising Committee established 1936.

MEACHEN, Edwin Purcell (Ted) b. Wanganui 1895. d. 1970. Educated Christchurch Marist Brothers' School. Served with NZEF at Gallipoli and in Egypt and France during World War I, being wounded twice. After war worked as builder. Represented Mid-Canterbury at rugby 1921–23 and Canterbury at rugby league 1924. Moved to King Country and worked for Public Works Department building bridges and houses for railways. Became active in NZ Workers' Union and NZLP. In 1930 shifted to Marlborough to work

on construction of railway camp at Wharanui. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Wairau 1931. MP Wairau 1935–38 and Marlborough 1938–46. Under-secretary for Works 1945–46. Later became secretary of seven unions until 1967. Mayor of Blenheim 1953–62 and chairman Marlborough Catchment Board 1955–70.

MONCUR, Alexander Francis. b. Melbourne, Australia, 1888. d. ____. Arrived NZ 1906. Miner on West Coast and at Waihi until 1910, when joined railways, becoming president of the Auckland branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants 1912–21. Railway guard for eleven years. Worked at Rotorua and owned taxi business at Whakatane, becoming a Whakatane Borough Councillor 1925–35 and secretary of the Whakatane branch of the NZLP from its inception. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Bay of Plenty 1928 and Rotorua 1931. MP Rotorua 1935–43. Air Force 1941–42. Mayor of Rotorua 1947–53.

MOORE, Mrs Eve Winnifred. b. 1884. d. 1959. Owned a bookshop on the corner of Lorne and Wellesley Streets. Joined SDP 1913 and foundation member Auckland Housewives' Union same year. Later a foundation member Auckland Women's Branch and very active member of Savage's Auckland West Branch. Active in Fabian Society and elected vice-president Auckland LRC 1929. President Auckland Associated Booksellers. Executive Committee NZ Society for Protection of Home and Family for over twenty years and still trustee at time of her death. Unsuccessfully sought Labour nomination for Auckland West on Savage's death. Awarded British Empire Medal for her work as vice-chairman Women's War Service Auxiliary during 1939–45 war. JP 1937–59.

MUNRO, James Wright. b. Dunedin 1870. d. 1945. Baker and president Dunedin Bakers' Union 1907. After victimisation by employers, started his own business in partnership with Peter Neilson. President Dunedin PLL 1907 and later president Dunedin Tailoresses' Union, Otago and Southland Woollen Mills Union, and Otago T and LC. National president NZ Socialist Party 1911. PLL candidate Dunedin West 1908 and Socialist candidate for the same seat 1911. SDP-LRC candidate Dunedin Central 1914 (defeated by 12 votes on an irregularity and also defeated in a subsequent by-election); NZLP candidate Dunedin Central 1919. MP Dunedin North 1922 (by-election and general election) –1925 (defeated) and 1928–45. Member Dunedin City Council 1927–45. Also served on Otago Harbour Board.

NASH, Sir Walter. b. Kidderminster, England, 1882. d. 1968. Arrived NZ 1909. A shopkeeper and commercial traveller. Christian Socialist and active member of Church of England. Interested in ULP 1911–12. Adopted pacifist position World War I. Formed New Plymouth branch NZLP 1918 and stood unsuccessfully as Labour candidate for New Plymouth Borough Council 1919. Elected to national executive NZLP 1919 conference. National secretary NZLP 1922–32 and president 1935–36. Unsuccessful candidate Wellington City Council 1927 and Wellington mayoralty 1929. Labour member Wellington Harbour Board 1933–38. MP Hutt 1929 (by-election)–1968. Minister of Finance 1935–49. Leader of the Opposition 1951–57 and 1960–63. Prime Minister 1957–60. Active in anti-Vietnam war movement 1965–68. Egotistical, cautious to the point of timidity, reluctant to delegate or make decisions, and often became bogged down in trivial paperwork. But a very hard worker and the mechanic, if only partially, and sometimes reluctantly the designer of Labour's economic policies. Biography written by Keith Sinclair, *Walter Nash*.

NEILSON, Peter. b. Dunedin 1879. d. 1948. Baker and from 1914 business partner of J. W. Munro. Active in Dunedin Socialist Party and SDP and served terms as president Dunedin Bakers' Union and Otago T and LC and Secretary Dunedin LRC. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Dunedin Central 1931 and MP for the same seat 1935–46. Served on Dunedin City Council, Maori Hill Borough Council, and NZLP National Executive.

NORDMEYER, Sir Arnold Henry (Nordy). b. Dunedin 1901. Father a German seaman who worked on gold dredge at Alexandra and mother from Ulster. Educated Waitaki Boys High School Worked for electrical wire contractor before going to Otago University College, where he completed BA and Diploma in Social Science. Then to Knox College and became Presbyterian minister 1925. Theologically moderate-conservative but strong belief in social gospel. Presbyterian minister for ten years at Kurow, North Otago, where became very friendly with Dr D. G. McMillan. Referee and representative selector Waitaki Rugby Football Sub-union. Labour MP Oamaru 1935–49 (defeated), Brooklyn and later Island Bay 1951–69. With McMillan responsible 1936–38 for working out most of the details of Labour's hospital programme embodied in the 1938 Social Security Act. An incisive debater and a politician of great integrity and courage. Minister of Health 1941–47, Industries and Commerce 1947–49, Finance 1957–60. Leader of NZLP and Opposition 1963–65 (deposed in favour of Norman Kirk). First native-born New Zealander to lead NZLP. President NZLP 1950–55 and vice-president 1942–50. Chairman NZ Superannuation Corporation 1974–76. Also served on board of the Reserve Bank and other bodies and wrote various reports for National and Labour Governments during 1970s.

O'BRIEN James. b. Victoria, Australia, 1875. d. 1947. Arrived NZ 1904. Coalminer and engine-driver at Runanga on West Coast. Imprisoned 1917–18 for sedition while opposing conscription. Chairman of directors and manager 1920–22 *Grey River Argus*. President Westland Engine-Drivers' Union. Active in organising co-operative societies. Greymouth and Runanga Borough Councillor. President Grey LRC. Labour candidate Westland 1919. MP Westland 1922–25 (defeated) and 1928–47. Minister of Transport and Marine 1942–47.

OSBORNE, Arthur George. b. Christchurch 1891. d. 1953. Moved to Auckland as a child. Bootmaker 1916–24, manager boot manufacturers 1926–29, and later fruit shop business. Joined PLL 1908. Later active Northcote branch NZLP and Waitemata LRC. Vice-president for time Auckland LRC. Northcote Borough Councillor. Unsuccessful Labour candidate for Waitemata 1925, 1928, 1931, and Parnell 1935. Elected MP Manukau 1936 (by-election) and held it and later Onehunga until death in 1953. Parliamentary under-secretary to Prime Minister 1946–49.

PAIKEA, Paraire Karaka ('Friday'). b. Kaipara 1894. d. 1943. Ngati Whatua tribe. Educated St Stephen's Native College and Wesley Training College. Minister Methodist Church 1915–25 and farmer at Otamatea until 1925, when he became private secretary to T. W. Ratana and chief executive officer of the Ratana Movement. Editor Ratana journal. Unsuccessful candidate Northern Maori 1928, 1931, 1935. Secretary Maori Advisory Council Labour Party 1936. MP Northern Maori 1938–43. Minister representing Native Race 1941–43.

PARRY, William Edward (Bill). b. Orange, NSW, Australia, 1878. d. 1952. Arrived NZ 1906. Miner and member Royal Commission on mines 1911. Secretary Waihi Miners' Union and in 1912 as its president imprisoned in Mount Eden gaol during strike. Vice president NZF of L and executive member SDP. 1914 organiser United Flaxworkers' Union in the Manawatu. Leading anti-conscriptionist World War I. Secretary Coal Miners' Federation 1918. In youth a noted cyclist and later a keen rifle shot and angler. 1919 Auckland representative of *Maoriland Worker*. Labour MP Auckland Central 1919–46 and Arch Hill 1946–51. Minister of Internal Affairs 1935–49 and Social Security 1940–49. Minister in charge of pensions when Labour introduced 1938 Social Security Act.

PAUL, John Thomas (Tom). b. Victoria 1874. d. 1964. Arrived NZ 1899. Journalist and printer with *Otago Daily Times*. President Otago Typographical Workers' Union 1902–25 and first elected president of Otago T and LC in 1903. Later president of Dunedin Tailoresses' Industrial Union of Workers, the Federated Clothing Trades Unions, the Shop Assistants' Union, and the Clerks', Cashiers' and Office Assistants' Union. Edited an Otago T and LC newspaper called the *Liberal* and later renamed the *Beacon* 1905–6. Appointed by the Liberal Government to a land commission in 1905, and in 1907 at the age of thirty-three became member of the Legislative Council. MLC 1907–19. In 1904 at T and LC conference Paul moved the motion to form the Independent Politcal Labour League. President ULP 1912–13. Opposed creation SDP 1913 although a delegate to the 1913 Unity Congress. Commander of Otago Division of the National Defence League (from 1905) and in 1914 became first chairman of the Advisory Board to the NZ Federation of Patriotic War Relief Societies and remained on the National Patriotic Fund Board until 1962. Influenced by writings of Robert Blatchford, the author of *Merrie England*. Vice-president NZ Land Values League. At the 1916 Unity Conference, which created NZLP, Paul was one of committee of seven who drafted the new party's constitution and programme. President NZLP 1918–20. Wrote a weekly column, 'Industrial World', for the *Otago Daily Times* 1907–40 and a large number of other articles and pamphlets including a eulogistic official NZLP history, *Humanism in Politics* (1946). Resigned from Legislative Council 1919 to become unsuccessful Labour candidate for Dunedin South, losing by 84 votes. Did not stand for parliament again but devoted himself to journalism, broadcasting, the WEA and yachting. Editor *Otago Witness* 1924–32. Director of publicity, and as such the Government's official chief censor, during World War II. Returned as MLC 1946–50 and following its abolition became member of the Constitutional Society, which sought the creation of a more acceptable Upper House and a written constitution for New Zealand.

PETRIE, Charles Robert. b. Glasgow, Scotland, 1882. d. 1958. Employed in Scottish co-operative movement 1897–1911. Arrived NZ 1911. After spending eight years in the South Island, including the West Coast, managing a co-operative store at Blackball, moved to Auckland in 1919 to become a store manager. Started his own grocery shop in Otahuhu in 1922. Active Presbyterian. Otahuhu Borough Councillor 1924–31 and mayor of Otahuhu 1935–44. Member Auckland Grammar School and Otahuhu College Boards of Governors. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Hauraki 1928 and 1932 (by-election). MP Hauraki 1935–38 and Otahuhu 1938–49.

POWELL, Miss Harriet Frances Mary. b. Ballarat, Victoria, 1877. d. ____ Described by J. T. Paul as New Zealand's 'pioneer lady organiser of the Labour and Socialist movement' (*Otago Daily Times*, 4 April 1908). Licensed shorthand writer who worked in the Ballarat Court and the Victorian Supreme Court in Melbourne. Spent three months in NZ from April 1905 as a 'mental science lecturer'. PLC organiser in NSW and Victoria who visited the Rutherglen district several times in 1906 and 1907 and on each occasion was escorted by Savage around all the mines. An ardent advocate of the co-operative movement in Victoria. Spoke not only in support of an independent Labour Party and socialism but also frequently on the emancipation and equality of women—economically, socially and sexually as well as politically. Argued that socialism was not a 'levelling down' or 'Government ownership and management' where 'the worker was still treated as mere flesh-and-blood machinery, to be thrown aside when worked out' but an environment in which human nature could develop to its full potential. Returned to NZ, arriving in Auckland 6 October 1907, three days before Savage arrived in Wellington. Toured NZ speaking at first on behalf of the PLL during latter part of 1907 and during 1908. Described by the *Otago Daily Times* (4 April 1908) as 'of pleasing appearance and charming frankness of manner' and by the *Free Lance* (20 June 1908) as 'the Joan of Arc of the [socialist] fraternity' and 'she of the glib tongue and the socialistic temperament' who 'always vanquishes wherever she goes'. Miss Powell formed the first branch of the PLL at Waihi, where in early 1908, at a time when Savage again perhaps coincidentally was also visiting Waihi, 'she harangued the crowds of miners from the elevation of a soapbox, or a gelignite case. The miners gasped and were vanquished'. Later visited Canterbury, Otago and Southland, and reported that at over forty meetings 'I talked unadulterated Socialism', to which she was converted after writing a paper on 'The Nationalisation of the Professions of Medicine and Law'. Recruited a considerable number of women into socialist political activity. Supported Blackball strike of 1908. Returned to Australia for a few months to lecture in Queensland before returning again to NZ in October 1908. Spoke in Auckland on 'Socialism and Religion' at a meeting organised by Savage before revisiting Waihi to lecture and to organise for R. F. Way, the Socialist Party candidate for Ohinemuri at the 1908 election. Returned to Victoria 1909. Represented Barwon branch at 1910 and 1911 conferences of Victorian Labour Party and 1910 became member of the central committee, polling fifth equal of fifteen elected. Lost her seat at 1911 conference and thereafter dropped from sight. She was not the Miss H. Powell (Hilda Olive Powell), secretary of the Dunedin Women's Branch and mentioned several times in the *Maoriland Worker* between 1917 and 1925, who was one of six communists expelled from the Otago LRC in 1925.

RATANA, Haami Tokouru. b. Parewanui 1894. d. 1944. Ngati Apa tribe. Eldest son of Maori prophet, faith-healer and founder of the Ratana Church, Tahupotiki Wiremu Ratana (1870–1939). A dairy farmer in the Turakina district. Fought with NZEF during World War I at Gallipoli and in Egypt, Belgium and France, where he was badly gassed and never really recovered his health. Toured world 1924–25. Unsuccessful independent candidate Western Maori 1922, 1928, 1930, 1931. President Ratana Church. MP Western Maori 1935–44, being elected as an independent but later joining the Labour Caucus.

RICHARDS, Arthur Shapton. b. Reading, England, 1877. d. 1947. Educated Drax Grammar School, Yorkshire. Arrived NZ 1894. Worked on sheep and cattle runs in Poverty Bay for ten years. Joined Socialist Party after hearing Tom Mann in 1902. In 1905 started a fruit and vegetable shop in Gisborne and subsequently became a land agent. Later active in drivers' and hotel workers' unions. President East Coast T and LC 1909. Moved to Auckland 1922 and became a Government Life Assurance salesman. President Auckland LRC for a time. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Hamilton 1922, Marsden 1925, Roskill 1928. MP Roskill 1931–47. Senior Government Whip at time of death in 1947. For some years national executive member of Society for Closer Relations with the USSR.

ROBERTS, Benjamin. b. Liverpool, England, 1880. d. 1952. Farm labourer in Derbyshire for fourteen years before arriving NZ 1907. Farm labourer in Wairarapa and then started wood and coal business in Carterton. Joined ULP 1913. Became farmer in 1916, developing a successful Jersey stud and growing tomatoes on a large scale. Active Methodist lay-preacher. Carterton Borough Councillor for six years. Organised and became provincial president of the Wairarapa Dairy Farmers' Union. Dominion executive Dairy Farmers' Union. Also president Wairarapa Jersey Club and chairman of the Parkvale Co-operative Dairy Company. President Carterton branch of the NZLP. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Manawatu 1925 and Masterton 1928. MP Wairarapa 1935–46 (retired through ill-health). Minister of Agriculture 1943–46.

ROBERTS, James (Big Jim). b. County Cork, Ireland, 1881. d. 1967. Arrived NZ 1901. Seaman from age of sixteen. In NZ a bushworker, railway construction labourer, gas stoker, and waterfront worker. Active in Wellington Socialist Party, which, with Robert Hogg, he kept from joining SDP in 1913. Secretary NZ Waterside Workers' Federation 1915–41 and Alliance of Labour 1920–35. In 1935 seriously considered pressing invitations to stand for Parliament in the Wanganui or New Plymouth seats but decided against accepting either nomination. Waterfront control commissioner 1940–46. President NZLP 1937–50 and vice-president 1934–36 and 1950–54. MLC 1947–50. Member Wellington City Council 1950–59 and also served on Wellington Harbour Board. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Wellington mayoralty 1944. For forty-one years chairman or member of the Board of the Standard Press. Became chairman of board of *Maoriland Worker* in 1927. Chairman and managing director *Southern Cross* newspaper. Known within the Labour movement as 'the uncrowned King of New Zealand'. A very likeable man and an astute and forceful chairman. Had a high opinion of Savage but although he respected Fraser's ability did not like him. According to Roberts' son, Professor John Roberts, on one occasion after he became Prime Minister, Fraser summoned Roberts and criticised him for being seen with a young woman in a Napier hotel. Roberts was very irate at the insinuation; the woman was his daughter.

ROBERTSON, John. b. Scotland 1875. d. 1952. Arrived NZ 1902. A watchmaker whose father was a minister of religion. Claimed to have been a foundation member of the ILP in Scotland in 1892 and in 1895 was secretary of the Independent Labour Party Federation of Great Britain. Became a union secretary (buttermakers, drivers and flaxworkers) in Palmerston North and wrote articles for early *Maoriland Worker*. Won Otaki on the second ballot at the 1911 election as an independent Socialist pledged only to the Flaxmill Workers' Union, which had nominated him. Joined ULP 1912 and SDP 1913. Became secretary Wellington Dairy Workers' Union 1912. MP Otaki 1911–14 (defeated). Levin Borough Councillor. After spending two years as sub-editor *Manawatu Daily Times*, edited paper *Commonwealth* 1918–19. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Riccarton 1919. Active in motion picture industry 1920–35 as secretary NZ Motion Picture Exhibitors' Association. Labour MP Masterton 1935–43. MLC 1946–50.

SAVAGE, Michael Joseph. b. Tatong, Victoria, 1872. d. 1940. Arrived NZ 1907. Son of Irish migrant farmers. Worked in Benalla wine shop 1886–93, as labourer and machine operator digging irrigation works on North Yanco station in Riverina district, NSW, 1893–1900, and as goldminer, stationary engine-driver, and manager of co-operative bakery at North Prentice and Rutherglen in north-east Victoria 1900–7. In Benalla was secretary of the fire-brigade and treasurer of the Hospital and Asylum Appeal Committee, and at North Prentice, secretary of a committee that built and managed the local hall. Converted to socialism and active politics by Tom Mann 1904. Branch and electorate secretary Victorian Political Labor Council and selected as Labour candidate for state seat of Wangaratta and Rutherglen 1907 after narrowly missing selection shortly before for the federal seat of Indi. Withdrew as candidate and moved to New Zealand in late 1907. Had been active in the socialist group at the 1906 and 1907 conferences of Victorian PLC and had fought without success for adoption of socialist objective and to prevent split in the party. After six months working as a flax-cutter in Manawatu moved to Auckland and became cellarman in Hancock's brewery in Auckland and almost immediately president Auckland Brewers', Wine and Spirit Merchants' and Aerated Water Employees' Union. Secretary Auckland Socialist Party 1908–10 and chairman 1910–11. National executive NZSP 1912. President Auckland Trades and Labour Council 1910 and in that year led minority of delegates who pressed unsuccessfully for the T and LC Federation to adopt as its objective 'the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange', for an alliance of the T and LCs and the 'Red' Federation of Labour, and for the formation of a new political Labour party that would absorb the socialists. 1911 declined renomination as president Auckland T and LC and became instead chairman of the Auckland branch of the NZF of L, the 'Red Feds'. As such spoke frequently in support of miners during 1912 Waihi strike. Elected foundation president Auckland branch SDP 1913 and in 1915 became first secretary of the Auckland LRC on its creation. Secretary Auckland LRC 1915–17 and 1918–20 and president 1917–18. Worked for a short time as full-time organiser for SDP 1914. Foundation member Auckland WEA 1915. Vice-president NZLP 1917 and in 1919 elected first full-time, paid national secretary of the Labour Party while still holding office as secretary of Auckland LRC. Auckland Provincial Area Representative NZLP National Executive 1926–33. Member national executive of UF of L 1918 and chairman of its special committee formed to oppose the introduction of an industrial manpower scheme. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Auckland City Council 1915. Auckland City Councillor 1919–23 and member Auckland Hospital Board 1919–23 and 1927–35. Socialist candidate Auckland Central 1911 and SDP-LRC candidate for the same seat 1914. MP Auckland West 1919–40,

Deputy Leader Labour Party 1922–33, Leader of the Opposition 1933–35, and Prime Minister 1935–40.

SCHRAMM, Frederick William (Bill). b. Hokitika 1886. d. 1962. Danish parents. Educated Canterbury University College (LLB). Barrister and solicitor, and was deputy registrar in Justice Department (Auckland Supreme Court) before starting own law practice in Auckland in 1922. Prominent athlete, cricketer and hockey player in younger days. Joined SDP before World War I. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Hamilton 1928. Auckland president both West Coasters' and NZ Natives' Associations. MP Auckland East 1931–46. Unsuccessful candidate Auckland mayoralty 1947. President Auckland LRC 1955–57. An early friend and ally of John A. Lee, Schramm moved Lee's expulsion from the NZLP at the 1940 conference and Lee subsquently did everything he could to ensure Schramm's eventual electoral defeat in 1946.

SCOTT BENNETT, Harry. b. Australia 1878. d. Sydney 1959. In NZ 1909–15 and brief visits thereafter. President Victorian Social Democratic Party 1902–4 and later secretary Victorian Socialist League, which he joined after leaving Australian Labor Party, which he had represented as member for Ballarat West in the Victorian State Legislature 1904–7. Disillusioned and did not seek re-election. Also at that time loved gambling and was possibly associated with the Melbourne Roman Catholic gangster and gambling boss John Wren, who was later to exert considerable political influence in Melbourne. With Michael Joseph Savage et al. fought unsuccessfully for socialist objective at Victorian PLC conference 1907. 1908 became organiser for the Australian Socialist Federation, whose secretary was Henry Edmund Holland. Arrived NZ 1909 as lecturer for 'Red Feds' and Socialist Party. Associated again with Savage in Auckland Socialist Party branch where Savage was chairman and Scott Bennett the lecturer-organiser. A brilliant speaker whose descriptive eloquence enthralled his audiences. His major subjects were socialism, rationalism, and opposition to prohibition. Left NZ in 1912 intending to go to Europe and the United States but after a short time in Australia returned in the same year to Auckland where his wife died in 1913, leaving Scott Bennett with three children. Elected national organiser SDP 1914 but left NZ and returned to Australia 1915. Lectured in United States 1916. Organiser Victorian Socialist Party 1917–20. Thereafter lived in Sydney, a rationalist and socialist lecturer for another forty years. Returned to NZ for lecture tours in 1922–23 and 1939–40.

SCRIMGEOUR, Rev. Colin Graham (Scrim, Uncle Scrim). b. Wairoa, Hawke's Bay, 1903. Freezing worker and later labourer Hawke's Bay Motor company. Entered Methodist ministry 1923 and concentrated almost exclusively on social work. Became Auckland Methodist city missioner for six years. Close friend of both Michael Joseph Savage and John A. Lee. Established Friendly Road Broadcasting station (1ZB) 1933 after earlier broadcasting from Lewis Eady's 1ZR. Controller of National Commercial Broadcasting Service 1936–43. Suspended as controller 1 March 1943 and appointment revoked by cabinet 18 June 1943. Unsuccessful independent candidate for Wellington Central 1943 against Prime Minister Peter Fraser, with whom Scrimgeour shared a deep and undying mutual enmity. Moved to Australia 1944 and worked in radio and television there and in Communist China before returning to retire in NZ 1968.

SEMPLE, Robert. b. Sofala, NSW, Australia 1873. d. 1955. Worked in mines in NSW, Victoria and West Australia. Blacklisted following strike at Korumburra, where he was miners' union president. Arrived NZ 1903. Worked as miner for gold and coal, and on construction of the Otira tunnel. President of miners' union at Runanga, helped establish Socialist Party on West Coast, and in 1908 became president of the NZ Miners' Federation. Fulltime organiser for NZF of L 1910 and as such involved in 1912 Waihi and 1913 waterfront strikes. Imprisoned for sedition during 1913 strike and later during World War I imprisoned for three years for opposing conscription (only served twelve months). Held for Labour the Wellington South seat at a by-election in 1918 after the death of A. H. Hindmarsh, Labour's first parliamentary caucus chairman, but defeated at 1919 general election. Manager Orongorongo co-operative tunnelling work 1921–24 and subsequently organiser for freezing workers' union. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Otaki 1925. MP Wellington East 1928–46 and Miramar 1946–54. Minister of Public Works and Transport 1935–49. Labour member Wellington City Council 1925–35. Noted for vigorous and picturesque utterances. A great mimic and entertainer, and described by one contemporary as a 'noisy larrikin'.

SKINNER, Clarence Farringdon (Jerry). b. Auckland 1900. d. 1962. Father a missionary in Te Kopuru district near Hokianga. A carpenter who later farmed until the Depression, when he worked on the Waitaki hydro-electric power scheme. Became president Inangahua Medical Association. MP Motueka 1938–62. Served in World War II, rising from sapper to rank of major. Awarded the Military Cross for bomb and mine disposal work at El Alamein and also mentioned in despatches on another occasion. Minister for Rehabilitation 1943–49, Lands and Forests 1946–49, and Lands and Agriculture 1957–60. Deputy Leader Labour Party 1951–62 and Deputy Prime Minister 1957–60. One of those instrumental in establishing New Zealand's pulp and paper industry.

STEWART, Mrs Catherine Campbell Sword. b. Glasgow, Scotland, 1881. d. 1957. A weaver and social worker. Theosophist. Educated Glasgow University and involved in Co-operative Women's Guild and Women's Suffrage Political Union in Scotland. Arrived NZ 1921. Helped found Wellington Women's Co-operative Guild (later known as the Women's Study Circle) and first secretary of the Wellington After-care Association for sub-normal children. Member National Council of Women. Labour MP Wellington West 1938–43.

SULLIVAN, Daniel Giles (Dan). b. Christchurch 1882. d. 1947. Strong Roman Catholic with Irish father and Scottish mother. French polisher and journalist, who spent four years (1900–4) working his way round the world including lengthy periods in Australia, Scotland, Ireland and England. Worked for a time in the Belfast shipyards. President and secretary of both Canterbury French Polishers' Union and the National Federation of Furniture Trades Unions. Elected president Canterbury T and LC 1911 after being vice-president 1908–10. Elected president UF of L 1914. President Christchurch PLL 1908, active in first NZLP 1910–11 and ULP 1912–13, secretary of 1912 conference that established ULP, and joined SDP 1913. Unsuccessful PLL candidate Avon 1908, NZLP candidate Riccarton 1911, and SDP candidate Avon 1914. Labour MP Avon 1919–47. Minister of Industries and Commerce 1935–47, Railways 1935–41, Supply and Munitions 1941–45. Acting Prime Minister April to July 1944. Christchurch City Councillor 1915–23 and 1925–31, and mayor of Christchurch 1931–36.

THORN, James. b. Christchurch 1882. d. 1956. Educated Christchurch Boys High School and passed Civil Service entrance examination. Worked at first in Addington railway workshops and later as a journalist. Served as bugle boy in NZ contingent to Boer War. Secretary Canterbury Farm Workers' Union 1907–8. Foundation member PLL, secretary of its Christchurch branch, and unsuccessful PLL candidate Christchurch South 1905 and 1908. Spent five years (1909–13) in England and Scotland, during which time he worked for ILP engaged in propaganda work with 'Clarion' and 'Forward' vans. Returned to NZ during 1913 strike and engaged in tomato-growing in Manawatu. Became full-time organiser SDP 1914 and SDP candidate Palmerston North 1914. Later recalled that only four SDP members present at 1914 selection meeting. Two voted for Thorn and two against, but latter two subsequently agreed to his contesting the seat. Sub-editor *Maoriland Worker* 1914–21 and editor 1921–32. A rousing outdoor speaker. Arrested and imprisoned for opposing conscription World War I. Secretary Wellington LRC 1927. Later served as NZLP president 1929–31, vice-president 1925–27, 1928–29, 1936–38, and national secretary 1932–35. Unsuccessful candidate Otaki 1931. Labour MP Thames 1935–46 (seat abolished) and parliamentary under-secretary to the Prime Minister 1943–46. NZ High Commissioner to Canada 1947–50 and president United Nations Economic and Social Council 1949. A pleasant man and a hard worker but dominated by Fraser and Walsh. Author of *Peter Fraser, New Zealand's Wartime Prime Minister.*

TIRIKATENE, Sir Eruera Tihema. b. Kaiapoi 1895. d. 1967. Ngai Tahu tribe. Farmer and Canterbury rugby representative. Medical sergeant 1st NZEF in Egypt and France. After war became dairy farmer. Then qualified as marine engineer and became proprietor Port Levy-Lyttelton ferry 1921–26. Later foreman engineering workshops and farm manager Ratana Pa 1926–32. Unsuccessful candidate Southern Maori 1928 and 1931. MP Southern Maori 1932–67 (Labour 1935–67). In cabinet representing Maori race 1943–49. Minister Forests and Associate Minister Maori Affairs 1957–60. Knighted 1960. Succeeded as MP for Southern Maori by his daughter, Mrs Tini Whetu Marama Tirikatene-Sullivan.

WALSH, Fintan Patrick (Jack). b. Patutahi near Gisborne 1896. d. 1963. Real name Patrick Tuohy and came from a farming family in Poverty Bay. Went to sea during World War I and spent five years as a seaman working out of San Francisco in the USA. In 1927 became president of the NZ Seamen's Union, a position he held until his death thirty-six years later. Also president and secretary of various other unions including the biscuit workers', the fishermen's and the clerical workers'. President of Wellington Trades Council from 1937, and vice-president (1945–53) and then president (1953–63) of the NZF of L. Member Economic Stabilisation Commission controlling wages and prices 1942–50. Member NZ Communist Party 1920–22 and continued to buy and read their literature for many years after. But became violently anti-communist in the later years of his life. During 1920s purchased a Wairarapa farm and became one of the largest dairy producers in New Zealand. Described himself in his will as a farmer, not a seaman, unionist, or union secretary. A member of the Wellington North branch of the NZLP for many years and enjoyed a close working relationship with Peter Fraser, whom he admired as a 'cunning old fox'. Open contempt for most politicians. An excellent orator and organiser but vicious and totally unprincipled in dealing with critics, rivals and enemies, whom he bullied, blackmailed and had physically assaulted. Rough, tough and ruthless.

WARD, Sir Joseph George. b. Melbourne 1856. d. 1930. Arrived NZ 1860. Became grain merchant 1877. Mayor of Campbelltown Borough Council 1881–86 and 1897–98. Chairman Bluff Harbour Board 1883–88 and 1893–94. Elected MP Awarua 1887. Liberal Party minister from 1891 and appointed Treasurer 1893. Resigned from Ministry 1894 following the financial failure of his business but after 1899 election returned as Postmaster General and Minister of Industries and Commerce. Acting Prime Minister 1902. Prime Minister 1906–12. Minister of Finance Wartime Coalition Government 1915–19. Lost his seat at the 1919 election and defeated again at by-election for Tauranga 1923. Re-elected as MP for Invercargill 1925 and became leader newly formed United Party 1927. Prime Minister 1928–30, when he resigned on health grounds and died a few weeks later. Created KCMG 1901 and baronet 1911. See forthcoming biography by Michael Bassett.

WEBB, Patrick Charles (Paddy). b. Rutherglen, Victoria, 1884. d. 1950. Attended local state school until age fifteen, when went to work for father, who owned a vineyard. Became at seventeen a miner at North Prentice, at eighteen steward of local branch of Australian Miners' Association, and at nineteen secretary of the Rutherglen Labor Council. Keen cricket and football player in youth. With M. J. Savage, G. R. Hunter, and Webb's brother-in-law Alfred Plant, formed branch of PLC of Victoria at North Prentice 1904 and became its first secretary. Arrived Dunedin NZ 1905. Worked as drainlayer and in freezing works and Timaru threshing mills before going to Wellington to attend Seddon's funeral 1906. Thought of trying to improve his formal education in the hope of becoming a lawyer but decided instead to go to the West Coast and became a trucker in Denniston coal mine. Went to Blackball and involved in 1908 strike. Dismissed and went to state mine at Runanga. With Hickey and Hunter, helped establish Socialist Party on the West Coast and a founder of NZ Federation of Labour, succeeding Semple as president of the latter in 1909. Socialist candidate Grey 1911. Chairman board of *Maoriland Worker* 1911–13. Won Grey for SDP in 1913 by-election on second ballot. Re-elected as SDP candidate 1914 and held the seat until 1918, when he resigned to force a by-election on the issue of his conscription into the armed forces. Re-elected unopposed but then imprisoned for two years, spent tree-planting on Kaingaroa Plains, for refusing to accept his call-up into the Army. Forfeited the seat through non-attendance and also deprived of civil rights for ten years. After release became a co-operative miner with Hunter at Dunolly, then co-operative tunneller with Semple at Orongorongo, and in 1924, again with Hunter, established a prosperous coal business in Christchurch. Unsuccessful Labour candidate Motueka 1932. Labour MP Buller 1933–46. Minister of Mines 1935–40, Labour, and Postmaster General 1940–46. Excellent orator in his younger days. Enjoyed shooting, fishing, horse-racing and company of the opposite sex. A charming, loyal and generous personality and probably Savage's closest political friend.

WILLIAMS, Charles Morgan (Morgan). b. North Wales 1878. d. 1970. A letter sorter in London. Active in Battersea branch British Social Democratic Federation and later secretary of its Clapham branch. Arrived NZ 1902. After three years as farm labourer became farmer in Ohoka district. Foundation secretary Kaiapoi branch NZ Farmers' Union 1906. A pedigree Ayrshire breeder with farms at Kaiapoi and Waverley, Williams also operated a grain and produce business and was involved with afforestation. Member Eyre County Council and Kaiapoi Borough Councillor 1927–35. Mayor of Kaiapoi 1948–51. Joined

SDP 1913. Labour's unsuccessful candidate Kaiapoi 1919 and 1925 and Mid-Canterbury 1928. Labour MP Kaiapoi 1935–46 (seat abolished) and unsuccessful candidate St Albans 1946. Chairman of the Dairy Produce Marketing Commission. Regarded by some observers and colleagues as somewhat eccentric, but undoubtedly intelligent and able.

WILSON, David. b. Glasgow, Scotland, 1880. d. 1977. Orphan at ten years of age. Tailor. Wandered about Britain before becoming member of Robert Blatchford's Clarion Club and also Fabian Society in London. President Amalgamated Society of Tailors (Derbyshire) for five years. Assistant Secretary Derbyshire T and LC and secretary Derby Socialist Society for three years and on candidate selection committee that chose J. H. Thomas, for whom Wilson became election organiser. Migrated to Australia 1911 and organised for ALP in Western Australia. Started Melbourne Fabian Club and spent short time at Wonthaggi, where P. C. Webb's brothers and brother-in-law were prominent in the miners' union. Arrived in NZ 1916 and became manager of Nelson tailor's shop, where he met Walter Nash, then a commercial traveller in cloth. Moved to Auckland about 1917 and started own tailoring business at St Helier's Bay. Became delegate to Auckland LRC, where he became a firm and lifelong admirer and friend of the then LRC secretary, Savage. Organised Parry's campaign for Auckland Central 1919. Succeeded Savage as secretary Auckland LRC 1920–22. Sold business and moved to Wellington as assistant national secretary (to Nash and later to James Thorn). National secretary NZLP 1936–40. MLC 1937–44 and 1947–49. Leader of Legislative Council, minister without portfolio, and member Executive Council 1939–44, and 1947–49. Also for a time Minister of Broadcasting and Minister of Manpower. NZ High Commissioner in Canada 1944–47. NZ delegate UN General Assembly 1944–47, UNESCO 1946–47, UNICEF 1946–47, FAO 1945.

WILSON, George Hamish Ormond (Ormond). b. Bulls 1907. Sheepfarmer. Grandson of Sir James Wilson, one of the foremost leaders of the conservative, landed political oligarchy that governed NZ for most of the period prior to 1890 and founder and first dominion president (1902–20) NZ Farmers' Union. Educated Christ's College and Lincoln College, Oxford, 1926–30, graduating with an MA. Came under socialist influences at Oxford. Returned to NZ 1930. Joined NZLP 1935, when he offered himself as a candidate for Rangitikei, though he had made donations to Labour from 1931. Labour MP Rangitikei 1935–38 and Palmerston North 1946–49. Worked for BBC London 1939–44. Chairman Historic Places Trust 1958–70 and chairman Board of Trustees of the National Art Gallery and Museum 1975–78. Awarded CMG 1979. Wrote autobiography, *An Outsider Looks Back. Reflections on Experience.*

YOUNG, Frederick George, b. London 1889. d. 1962. Arrived NZ before World War I. Served in NZ forces overseas 1914–18. Became secretary Auckland Hotel Workers' Union in 1920s and NZ Hotel Workers' Federation in 1932. Was still the Auckland Secretary at the time of his death in 1962. Was alleged to be a secret member of the Communist Party in the 1920s but in later life a bitter anti-communist. First president Auckland District Council of the Federation of Labour 1937–42 and provisional chairman of the more militant breakaway Trades Union Congress in 1950. Very influential in Auckland LRC and on its executive for almost twenty-five years from early 1930s until 1958, through his leadership of a coalition of union delegates. Responsible for helping Lee

replace Bartram as Labour candidate for Grey Lynn in 1931 and for selection of Sayegh instead of Mason as Labour's mayoral candidate in 1935. Saw Sayegh as a weaker opponent to Ernest Davis, the brewer whom many believed bought Young's continuing co-operation for more than thirty years. Young narrowly escaped expulsion from the party but was censured over this and other matters at the 1935 NZLP conference after a major dispute with Savage, Lee, et al. Prominent in the expulsion of Lee in 1940. Member of the Legislative Council 1941–50. Director of the Tourist Hotel Corporation 1959–62. In 1958, when still national secretary of the Hotel Workers' Union and chairman of the Roskill-Epsom branch of the Labour Party and executive member of the Auckland LRC, Young, in a widely publicised letter, attacked the parliamentary Labour Party and the Prime Minister, Nash, in particular for betraying his union members. Although he resigned from the LRC executive a motion that he be expelled from the party was defeated. Subsequently the Hotel Workers' Union defected from the Labour Party in 1959 and was not persuaded to return until after Young's death. Young was undoubtedly a rough and ruthless, and probably a corrupt, union boss whose speech and letters were marked by crude and violent profanity.

For biographies of other people associated with the foundation of the New Zealand Labour Party, see biographical appendix, pp. 153–69, Barry Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence*.

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NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS

ANL	Australian National Library	PP	J. T. Paul Papers
ASP	Alexander Scott Papers	RP	J. Roberts Papers
BMS	Burton Manuscript	SP	Silverstone Papers
CMWP	Charles Morgan Williams Papers	SPP	Socialist Party Papers
CP	Joseph Gordon Coates Papers	TMS	Turnbull Manuscript
EMBP	Eileen M. Brown Papers	VSA	Victorian State Archive
FP	G. M. Fowlds Papers	*Advertiser*	*Wagga Wagga Advertiser*
McAP	P. W. G. McAra Papers	*Argus*	*Narrandera Argus*
McCP	McCarthy Papers	*Ensign*	*Benalla and North Eastern Ensign*
NP	Nash Papers	*Miner*	*Rutherglen Miner*
NPP	National Party Papers	*MW*	*Maoriland Worker*
O'FC	Patrick James O'Farrell Collection	*Standard*	*Benalla Standard*
O'FP	Patrick James O'Farrell Papers	*Sun*	*Rutherglen Sun and Chiltern Valley Advertiser*
		Worker	*(Australian)*

I THE 'TUPENNY CHILD', 1872–86

1. Much of the information on Michael Joseph Savage's family was provided by Mrs Eileen Brown, the eldest daughter of Rowland Savage, Michael's older brother. Mrs Brown wrote an unpublished 'Salute to Michael Joseph Savage', copies of which are in the possession of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, and Dr Barry Gustafson, University of Auckland. Mrs Brown provided further information in several lengthy interviews, 10, 11 and 12 Feb. 1980 and 22 Aug. 1981, and in numerous letters 1980–84. Her sisters, Mrs May O'Donoghue and Mrs Doris Cofield, both of whom spent holidays with Michael Savage in New Zealand during the 1920s and 1930s, also helped with recollections, letters and photos. Also birth certificate of Michael Savage.
2. *Dannevirke Evening News*, 18 June 1938
3. Genealogical research by Judge Rowland Henry Savage Healy, a Dublin solicitor and onetime judge in Burma, who was Michael Joseph Savage's second cousin. A copy of his summary is in the author's possession. For a history of the Savages

of the Ards, see Armstrong, *The Savages of the Ards*.

4. United States National Archives and Records Information Services, Washington D.C. Rowland enlisted in Memphis on 26 April 1861. 1st Lieutenant and officer commanding C Company, 1st Tennessee Regiment, also known as 154 Senior Regiment, Tennessee Infantry. Surrendered 5 May 1865.
5. O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church in Australia*, p. 72
6. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 Nov. 1852 cit. Serle, *The Golden Age*, p. 67. See also Cannon, *Life in the Cities*, and Davison, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*.
7. The author examined various land maps and records at the Victorian State Archives and the La Trobe State Library of Victoria, and was also assisted in finding and interpreting information about Richard Savage's selections and those of his children by Mrs Judith Bassett, who is research officer of the Benalla and District Historical Society.
8. Cannon, *An Australian Camera*, p. 27. For a vivid description of rural life in nineteenth-century Australia, see Cannon, *Life in the Country*. When Michael was born, Rose was eleven years old, Richard ten, Hugh eight, William six, Rowland four, and Joseph two.
9. There are numerous books on Ned Kelly, the most interesting and informative including Brown, *Australian Son. The Story of Ned Kelly*, and McQuilton, *The Kelly Outbreak 1878–1880*. For a critical analysis of McQuilton's thesis of Kelly as a 'social bandit', see Jones and Bassett, *The Kelly Years*, pp. 121–6. Gollan, *Radical and Working Class Politics*, p. 6, discusses the wider political implications of the struggle between squatters and selectors, as does Ward, *The Australian Legend*.
10. *Wellington Evening Post*, 16 June 1938
11. *Ensign*, 28 Oct. 1870. For reports of floods earlier in the year, see 24 June, 8 Sept. 1870.
12. Ibid., 16 Dec. 1873
13. Cit. E. Brown, 'Salute to Michael Joseph Savage', pp. 1/5–6
14. Ibid., p. 1/8
15. Cannon, *An Australian Camera*, p. 27. Serle, *The Rush to be Rich*, p. 5, says about half the Victorian selectors failed utterly and abandoned their farms.
16. Details from two questionnaires filled in by Richard Savage, 'Application for Lease of Crown Grant by Licensee', 8 Feb. 1875 and 30 May 1878. Copies of these questionnaires and another filled in by Rose Savage, 1 March 1880, are in the possession of the author.
17. Cit. E. Brown, 'Salute to Michael Joseph Savage', p. 1/8
18. Ibid. p. 1/10. Coincidentally, another contemporary Labour politician had a similar background and destiny. Thomas J. Ryan, b. 1876, d. 1921, was the fifth of six children born to Irish settlers in Victoria. His mother died when he was seven and his sister, at the age of eleven, took over the care of the younger children. Ryan also later left Victoria and made his reputation as a Labour politician elsewhere, becoming Premier of Queensland, 1915–19, and was leader of the federal ALP at the time of his death.
19. *Oven and Murray Advertiser*, 9 Jan. 1879, cit. McQuilton, *The Kelly Outbreak 1878–1880*, p. 91
20. E.g. Peter Fraser to Jim Roberts, RP, Victoria University of Wellington Library
21. Richard Savage to Education Board of Advice, 29 March and 30 July 1873. Closed schools file (Rothesay), VSA 795/835
22. L. H. Graves, chairman, Education Board of Advice, to Education Department, 13 June and 16 July 1874, VSA 795/835
23. Robert Davies to Education Department, 23 Nov. 1878, VSA 795/835
24. *NZ Standard*, 23 June 1938
25. *Standard*, 30 Sept. 1879

26. *NZ Standard*, 23 June 1938
27. Sarah Ann Brown. b. near Beechworth, Victoria, 1860. Daughter of miner-farmer and one of seven children, four of whom became teachers. Taught at Rothesay School for about five years before in 1884 selecting 320 acres and in 1885 becoming a Roman Catholic and marrying Joseph Sullivan. Eight children, one of whom died of peritonitis in 1892. Husband died 1912 and Sarah Ann continued to farm with help of children. In 1926 a daughter-in-law died leaving two children aged one and three years. Mrs Sullivan, then sixty-six, raised them. Visited by Michael Savage at Tatong-Rothesay 1926 and corresponding with him 1935–38. d.1950, aged ninety years. The author interviewed Mrs Sullivan's daughter, Mrs Mona Filopponi, and grand-daughter, Mrs Reg. McCauley, 22 Aug. 1982.
28. Sarah Ann Sullivan to Mr Livesey, 12 May 1940, and to Rowland Savage, 12 May 1940, TMS 1361/2
29. Interview, Mrs Filopponi
30. Richard Savage to Hon. James A. Graves, 26 Sept. 1882, VSA 795/835. The blindness referred to was known locally as 'the sandy blight' and was quite common. Despite Richard Savage's efforts to keep the school open, it became half-time in 1886, closed temporarily in 1901, and was burnt down by a lunatic Italian and an Indian hawker and closed permanently in 1905.

II 'A MAN OF SORROWS AND ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF', 1886–93

1. *Ensign*, 11 May 1886
2. Smith, *The Cyclopedia of Victoria*, pp. 439–40
3. *Census of Victoria*, 1881
4. *Victorian Directory and Gazetteer for 1883*
5. Jones and Bassett, *The Kelly Years*, pp. 34–5
6. Greenwood, *Australia. A Social and Political History*, p. 176
7. *Ensign*, 7 May 1886. Also 27 July, 20 Aug., 28 Sept., 14, 24 Dec. 1886. In 1891 a committee was still trying to organise a Wednesday half-holiday, *Ensign*, 27 Feb. 1891.
8. *Standard*, 9 Dec. 1887, 6 Jan. 1888
9. *Ensign*, 29 June 1886
10. *Standard*, 29 Nov. 1889. See also Liddicoat, 'A History of the North Eastern College 1889–1909', Research Essay, Monash University, 1978.
11. *Standard*, 31 Dec. 1889
12. In Rutherglen, for example, Alfred John Sullivan, who was president of both the ANA and the Amalgamated Miners' Association and very active with Savage in the Political Labor Council and the Rutherglen Co-operative Society
13. This quotation and much of the other information in this paragraph comes from an address on the ANA by Field Barrett (Melbourne) in Benalla, *Ensign*, 16 Dec. 1890.
14. Ibid.
15. John Ginnivan, cit. E. Brown, 'Salute to Michael Joseph Savage', pp. 2/14–15
16. *NZ Standard*, 10 Aug. 1939
17. *Ensign*, 24 Feb. 1891
18. *Standard*, 23 Sept. 1892
19. *Melbourne Age*, Aug. 1981. See also Davison, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*, pp. 176, 224–5.
20. Jones and Bassett, *The Kelly Years*, pp. 106–7. Savage reminiscing at Christmas dinner, 1939, cit. Ian MacKay, 'Broadcasting and the Politicians', unpublished, undated (c. 1981) typescript, p. 16. Savage told Mackay that in the Benalla store

he had 'often served Ned Kelly's mother'. Also Dr Chris Cunneen to author, 1 March 1984.
21. *Ensign*, 29 July 1890
22. *Standard*, 17 Dec. 1889
23. *Ensign*, 25 July 1890
24. *Ensign*, 8 Aug. 1890
25. *Standard*, 15 Aug. 1890
26. *Standard* and *Ensign*, 1 May 1891
27. Proposed for membership, *Standard*, 10 July 1891; elected, *Standard*, 7 Aug. 1891
28. Information about the fire brigade and Savage's role in it is taken from the *Standard*, especially 6 Nov., 4, 18, 22 Dec. 1891, 1 Jan., 4, 18, 22 March, 1 April 1892.
29. *Ensign*, 11 July 1892
30. *Standard*, 30 Sept. 1892
31. *Standard*, 22 April 1892
32. *Standard*, 21 Oct., 16 Dec. 1892
33. *Argus*, 27 Aug. 1895
34. *Ensign*, 27 May 1884, 13 Jan., 24 Nov. 1891, 14 June 1892
35. *Standard*, 1 Aug. 1893
36. *Ensign*, 30 July 1889, 11 Dec. 1891, 31 May 1892, 2 May 1893, 13 April, 21 Sept. 1894
37. *Ensign*, 16 Dec. 1898
38. *Ensign*, 21 Aug. 1891
39. *Ensign*, 1 April 1892
40. *Standard*, 2, 5, 12 May, 2 June 1893
41. Cannon, *The Land Boomers*, p. 29. See also Serle, *The Rush to be Rich*.
42. Cowen, *Sir Isaac Isaacs*, p. 27
43. *Standard*, 2 May 1893
44. *Ensign*, 27 Feb. 1891, 3, 20 April 1894; *Standard*, 9 Feb. 1892, 15 Nov. 1898
45. McCarthy, 'Labour and the Living Wage', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 13, April 1967, p. 83
46. *Ensign*, 26 July 1892
47. Davison, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*, p. 214
48. Cannon, *Life in the Cities*, pp. 128–9
49. *Standard*, 13 Jan. 1891; also *Ensign*, 16 Jan. 1891
50. Cit. E. Brown, 'Salute to Michael Joseph Savage', p. 2/15
51. *Ensign*, 1 Jan. 1892
52. Ibid.
53. *Ensign*, 14 Feb. 1893
54. *Ensign*, 27 April, 29 May 1894; *Standard*, 29 May 1894
55. *Ensign*, 1 June 1875
56. E. Brown, 'Salute to Michael Joseph Savage', p. 2/16
57. Cannon, *The Land Boomers*, p. 24
58. Ibid., pp. 22–8, and Davison, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*, esp. p. 224
59. Savage addressing a Trade Union Club dinner during his visit to England. The dinner on about 12 June 1937 was chaired by Ben Tillett. TMS 1096/61.

III THE WILDERNESS YEARS, 1893–1900

1. *Pastoralists' Review*, 7 Sept. 1894, p. 374
2. Ibid.
3. E.g. *Argus*, 20 Aug. 1897, reported the deaths of two young men who had been looking for work and whose bodies had been found on separate stations.

4. *Argus*, 3 July, 7 Aug. 1894
5. *Argus*, 19 May 1899
6. *Argus*, 30 Jan., 12 Sept. 1893
7. *Narandera Ensign*, 31 Aug. 1900
8. *Argus*, 4 July 1893, a lengthy description of North Yanco Station. For later descriptions, see *Pastoralists' Review*, July 1895, pp. 255–6, and 16 Dec. 1903, pp. 715–7.
9. E.g. *Argus*, 22, 29 Jan. 1894, 18 June 1897, 25 March 1898; *Worker*, 16 March 1895
10. Wages Book, 1890–96, Tubbo Station records, RW 154/34, Riverina College Archives, Wagga Wagga
11. *Worker*, 24 Feb. 1894, 25 April 1896; *Socialist*, 15 Feb. 1908; Cannon, *Life in the Country*, p. 45
12. Cannon, *Life in the Country*, p. 45
13. *Argus*, 18 Dec. 1894; *Narandera Ensign*, 14 Dec. 1894
14. *Advertiser*, 4 Jan. 1894; *Argus*, 12, 19, 23 Dec. 1893, 4 Dec. 1894
15. *Argus*, 19, 23 Dec. 1893
16. *Worker*, 27 June 1899
17. *Narandera Ensign*, 9 Oct. 1896
18. *Narandera Ensign*, 15 Oct. 1897. Such events were not uncommon. In another incident the Narrandera court sentenced a young man to three months' hard labour for assaulting a Chinese market gardener, who was described as 'a most obliging and inoffensive man . . . in marked contrast to that of the hoodlum white larrikins that infest the town'. *Argus*, 13 Jan. 1899.
19. Ward, *The Australian Legend*, pp. 243–5; Gollan, *Radical and Working Class Politics*, pp. 112–3
20. Spence, *Australia's Awakening: Thirty Years in the Life of an Australian Agitator*, p. 15. William Guthrie Spence, b. Scotland 1845 and arrived in Australia as a child 1851. Miner. Married an Irish girl, Ann Savage, about 1870. No connection between Michael Savage and Ann Savage has been found. Secretary Miners' Association formed at Creswick in 1873 and later general secretary AMA. In 1886 helped organise and become first president of the ASU. In 1890 helped form and became first secretary of the GLU. One of the leaders of union movement during the 1890 maritime strike. Secretary of Australian Workers' Union formed in 1894 to unite all bushworkers. Elected to NSW Parliament 1898 as Labour member for Cobar and after Federation became Labour member for the federal seat of Darling. d. 1926.
21. Spence, *Australia's Awakening*, p. 14
22. *Worker*, 24 Sept. 1892. The labourer was A. Sims.
23. *NZ Sporting and Dramatic Review*, 9 March 1939
24. Ibid. For the formation of the AWU, see *Worker*, 24 March 1894; *Pastoralists' Review*, March 1894, p. 42; Spence, *History of the A.W.U.*; and John Bailey, 'A Short History of the Shearers' Union in the Making', unpub. typescript by one of the founders of the AWU, 3 Dec. 1945.
25. Greenwood, *Australia. A Social and Political History*. p. 157
26. *Argus*, 3, 17 April 1894; *Narandera Ensign*, 20 April 1894; *Worker*, 21 April 1894; *Advertiser*, 13 Sept. 1894; *Pastoralists' Review*, April 1894, pp. 102–3, July 1894, p. 237
27. *Advertiser*, 5 July, 28, 30 Aug., 13 Sept, 2, 6 Oct. 1894, 25 July 1895; *Pastoralists' Review*, Aug. 1894, pp. 310–2, Sept. 1894, pp. 321, 367, July 1895, p. 220
28. *Bulletin*, cit. *Pastoralists' Review*, Sept. 1894. p. 370
29. *Worker*, 5 May 1894; Roth and Hammond, *Toil and Trouble*, pp. 54–5
30. *Worker*, 18, 25 Aug., 1, 8, 15 Sept. 1894; *Advertiser*, 21, 25, 28, 30 Aug. 1894; *Narandera Ensign*, 31 Aug., 21 Sept. 1894; *Argus*, 21 Aug., 11 Sept., 23 Oct. 1894
31. *Narandera Ensign*, 31 Aug. 1894

32. *Pastoralists' Review*, Nov. 1894, p. 470; *Advertiser*, 25 Sept. 1894
33. The electoral roll for the *Murrumbidgee Electorate*, Narrandera Division, 1894, p. 33; also 1894–95, p. 28, and 1899–1900, p. 38, lists 'Savage, Michael, North Yanco, labourer'. To be entitled to enrol as an elector, Savage had to have lived in NSW for twelve months and in the electorate concerned for at least three months. See Chief Electoral Officer, cit. *Argus*, 5 June 1894.
34. Arthur Rae. b. Christchurch NZ 1860. Arrived Australia 1888. Married Annie Fryer of Blenheim, New Zealand, who printed first issues of the *Hummer*. Shearer, miner, bushworker. As secretary of the ASU, sentenced in 1890 to sixty-one separate and cumulative fortnights' imprisonment for bringing shearers out on strike and refusing to pay fines. Released after one month in prison. Life member ASU. President and general organiser AWU 1895, general secretary AWU 1898. MLA Murrumbidgee 1891–94. Senator NSW 1910–14, 1928–35. d. 1946.
35. *Argus*, 24 July 1894; *Advertiser*, 21 July 1894. For Rae's election results in the Murrumbidgee, see Hughes and Graham, *Voting for the New South Wales Legislative Assembly 1890–1964*, p. 9 (1891 election), p. 30 (1894), p. 53 (1895), and p. 72 (1898).
36. John Christian Watson. b. Valparaiso, Chile, 1867. Educated Oamaru, New Zealand. Printer *North Otago Times*. Arrived Sydney 1886. President NSW Trades and Labour Council and NSW branch of the Australian Labour Federation. MLA Young 1894–1901. MHR Bland 1901–6 and South Sydney 1906–10. Prime Minister and Treasurer 1904. Retired from politics 1910 and later director of various companies. d. 1941. Young had two MLAs in 1891, both elected as Labour-Protectionist. In 1894, when the seat was reduced to a single member, both stood as Protectionists but lost to the new Labour candidate, Watson.
37. E.g. *Advertiser*, the 'News in Brief' column on the front page usually contained six or seven items on New Zealand out of a total of about thirty, e.g. 31 March 1898 (6/31 items), 2 April 1898 (7/32 items).
38. *Advertiser*, 17 Dec. 1898. See also 1 March, 5 May 1894, and 30 Dec. 1899 for further examples.
39. E.g. *Pastoralists' Review*, Dec. 1898, contained fifteen photos in a supplement on New Zealand.
40. *Argus*, January–April 1900
41. E.g. *Advertiser*, 18 Oct. 1898
42. *Worker*, 9 Sept. 1899
43. Spence, *History of the A.W.U.*, p. 120
44. *Argus* and *Narandera Ensign*, 23 June 1899
45. *Argus*, 20 Jan. 1899
46. *Advertiser*, 16 April 1898
47. *Narandera Ensign*, 17 Nov. 1899
48. William Belcher, cit. *Worker*, 10 March 1900
49. E.g. *Hummer*, 19 Oct. 1891, 23 July 1892
50. *Hummer*, 20 Feb. 1892
51. *Advertiser*, 23 April 1898
52. *Narandera Ensign*, 8 May 1896
53. *Argus*, 18 July 1893. See also T. Ichikawa, 'Henry George in Australia', *Recorder* 70, June 1974.
54. Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward 2000–1887*, Cambridge, Mass., 1967 (first published 1887), p. 62, cit. Gollan, *Radical and Working Class Politics*, p. 122. In 1964–65 a New Zealand Labour MP, discussing his political awakening, recalled that, 'It all started at the age of 13 when Savage gave me a copy of Bellamy's *Looking Backward*'. Cit. Austin Mitchell, *Politics and People in New Zealand*, Whitcombe and Tombs, Christchurch, 1969, p. 243. John A. Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, p. 71, also refers to Savage's having read Bellamy. Among other NZ

Labour MPs elected in 1935 and described as 'Bellamyites' were Thorn, Carr, Herring, McMillan, Lyon, Howard, Williams, Richards, and Mrs Stewart, ASP 209.

55. Souter, *A Peculiar People*. See also *Worker*, 10 July 1893, *Advertiser*, 22 March 1894, and Ross, *William Lane and the Australian Labour Movement*.
56. Head's marriage broke up after his four-year-old son was lost and died in the bush shortly before the family was due to leave for Paraguay. After questions were asked about the association's financial affairs, Head handed the books over to be audited and disappeared. He changed his name to Walter Alan Woods and after a period in New Zealand became one of the founders of the Tasmanian Labour Party and Speaker of the Tasmanian House of Assembly. See Souter, *A Peculiar People*, pp. 101, 123, 126–7.
57. From 1900 until his death in 1917, Lane was a leader-writer for the *New Zealand Herald* and from 1913–17, its editor. He opposed the development of the first New Zealand Federation of Labour and the New Zealand Labour Party, bitterly denounced the unions during the 1912 Waihi and 1913 general strikes, and wrote numerous racist and jingoistic editorials. The most prominent radical journalist in Australia became the most prominent conservative journalist in New Zealand.
58. *Argus*, 16 Aug. 1897, 22 Aug., 31 Oct. 1899, 12 Jan., 16, 23 March 1900; *Narandera Ensign*, 16 July 1897, 12 May, 10, 24 Nov. 1899; *Advertiser*, 12 May, 6 Dec. 1898
59. Cannon, *Life in the Country*, p. 220
60. *Argus*, 19 Jan. 1900. Because of multiple applications, the number of actual applicants was considerably less, 631 according to *Narandera Ensign*, 12 Jan. 1900. See also 580 applications for three selections, all of about 300 acres at £3 per acre, *Narandera Ensign*, 5 Feb. 1897; 500 applicants for thirteen allotments, *Narandera Ensign*, 22 May 1896.
61. *Argus*, 1 Dec. 1899
62. *Narandera Ensign*, 21 June 1897
63. Minister of Lands, cit. *Narandera Ensign*, 4 Aug. 1899
64. *Pastoralists' Review*, Nov. 1895
65. *Advertiser*, 17 March, 2 April 1898; *Argus*, 18 March 1898; *Narandera Ensign*, 1 April 1898
66. *Argus*, 29 July 1898; *Advertiser*, 30 July 1898. The maps and papers relating to McCaughey's purchase of North Yanco are in Mitchell MSS. uncatalogued set 529. McCaughey also, for example, at the same time as he purchased North Yanco, secured 12 500 acres in very desirable mountain leases near Kiandra, *Narandera Ensign*, 28 Oct. 1898, and leased Boree Creek Station, *Narandera Ensign*, 3 Feb. 1899. With the help of the National Bank, which foreclosed on its previous owner, he had also obtained the Yarrabee Park Station in 1897, *Narandera Ensign*, 24 Nov. 1899. For a description of North Yanco in 1903, see *Pastoralists' Review*, 16 Dec. 1903, pp. 715–7.
67. There are two very favourable biographies of McCaughey: Archibald Crowley, 'The Life and Work of Sir Samuel McCaughey', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings*, XL, VI, 1954, pp. 293–316; and Patricia McCaughey, *Samuel McCaughey*. See also *Pastoralists' Review*, 15 July 1905, p. 353. A much more negative portrait is that by 'Duns Scotus' in *Truth*, reproduced in the *Narandera Ensign*, 2 Feb. 1894, where McCaughey of Coonong is attacked as 'MacShuffie of Boobiyong Station'. See also *Advertiser*, 16 June 1898; *Narandera Ensign* 14 Oct. 1898, which says he shore, at a conservative estimate, at least 1 400 000 sheep that year.
68. *Town and Country Journal*, 16 Dec. 1899, pp. 24–5; Crowley, 'The Life and Work of Sir Samuel McCaughey', p. 304
69. Savage, cit. *Ashburton Guardian*, 3 Aug. 1938. In 1926 he returned to the town of Griffith, which had grown up where North Yanco had once been, and

expressed amazement at the transformation that widespread irrigation had created.

70. *Argus*, 15 May 1893
71. *Narandera Ensign*, 2 Feb. 1894
72. Ibid.
73. *Worker*, 23 Sept. 1899
74. *Worker* 18, 25 Aug. 1900; *Argus*, 31 Aug. 1900
75. *Argus*, 3 Aug. 1900; *Pastoralists' Review*, Aug. 1900, p. 335; and the Narrandera Division of the Murrumbidgee Electorate 1899–1900. It is possible, of course, that the Savage who led the deputation on unemployment was some itinerant worker not on the electoral roll.
76. *Pastoralists' Review*, May 1900, p.133; *Advertiser* 5 April 1900

IV THE SOCIALIST AWAKENED, 1900–7

1. Information on Rutherglen's history comes from various sources including Barry Deas of Rutherglen; Smith, *The Cyclopedia of Victoria*, pp. 401–3; *Border Morning Mail*, 24 Jan. 1980; *Rutherglen Sun and Chiltern Valley Advertiser*, 1899–1908; *Rutherglen Miner*, 1903–7; and *Rutherglen and Wahgunyah News*, 1899–1901.
2. For history of North Prentice mine, including summaries of six-monthly shareholders' meetings and manager's reports, see *Sun*, 3 Oct., 7 Nov., 1 Dec. 1899, 8 June, 25 Sept., 27 Nov. 1900, 8 Feb., 30 Aug., 10 Sept., 15, 22 Oct., 22 Nov., 2 Dec. 1901, 31 Jan., 11 Feb., 3 June, 15, 19 Aug., 12 Dec. 1902, 27 Jan., 19 May 1903.
3. *Sun*, 6 May 1900
4. *Sun*, 11, 21 Sept. 1900
5. *Sun*, 18 Sept. 1900
6. *Sun*, 20 Dec. 1901
7. E.g. *Sun*, 11 Oct. 1901, 31 Jan. 1902
8. *Sun*, 20 Dec. 1903
9. Cannon, *Who's Master? Who's Man?*, pp. 211–2, and Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended*, p. 301
10. *Tocsin*, 5 May 1898
11. Peter Macarthy, 'The Harvester Judgment—An Historical Assessment', unpub. PhD thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 1967, p. 70
12. *Sun*, 9 Dec. 1902. According to the *Sun*, 20 July 1900, miners working in the wet were being paid 7*s.* to 8*s.* 4*d.* a shift in different mines. *Miner*, 16 Aug. 1905, reported that some shifts in Rutherglen mines were receiving only 4*s.* a shift.
13. *Sun*, 18 Sept. 1900
14. Ninety-seven thousand unionists in a total Australian population of 3 825 000 in 1901, according to government estimates cited by Carter Goodrich, 'The Labor Movement in New Countries: Australia, New Zealand, the United States', unpub. typescript, n.d. [c. 1929], Ch II, p. 2
15. J. A. Wallace, MLC, chairman of directors, Great Southern Mining Co., to shareholders, cit. *Sun*, 2 Oct. 1900
16. *Sun*, 1 Dec. 1899
17. Cit. *Sun*, 2 Oct. 1900. For the dispute at Chiltern Valley No 2, see also *Sun* 18, 25, 28 Sept., 27 Oct., 30 Nov., 11, 18 Dec. 1900.
18. *Sun*, 29 Jan. 1901
19. *Sun*, 9 Dec. 1902. See also *Sun*, 25 Nov. 1902.
20. *Sun*, 27 Aug. 1901, 3 Feb. 1903, 16 Feb. 1904; *Miner*, 20 Aug. 1904. In 1901 the Chiltern branch had numbered 500 members and the Rutherglen branch, temporarily in recess, another 200.

21. *Miner*, 3, 13 Aug. 1904
22. *Sun*, 19 Dec. 1905
23. *NZ Free Lance*, 15 July 1911, and *NZ Standard*, 4 April 1940. Savage earned 8*s*. 4*d*. per day as a winding driver. His friends, Paddy Webb, a braceman, George Hunter, pick and shovel, and George Ward, boilerman-fireman, received respectively 6*s*. 8*d*., 7*s*., and 6*s*. per day.
24. Christchurch *Press*, 28 March 1940
25. *Sun*, 20 March 1906
26. When Rowland and his family left Wahgunyah in 1902, the local community presented Richard Savage senior with 'a handsome silver-mounted walking stick' as a mark of the respect in which he was held after only four years there. *Sun*, 22 April 1902.
27. Will of Richard Savage, 26 Sept. 1908, and eight probate documents including a sworn statement concerning his father's final ten years of life by Rowland Savage. Registrar of Probates, Melbourne, Victoria, Series No 116532.
28. *Nurmurkah Standard*, 30 Sept. 1908; *Nurmurkah Leader*, 2 Oct. 1908
29. Ibid.
30. *Sun*, 25 Feb. 1902
31. *NZ Standard*, 4 April 1940; *Listener*, 5 April 1940
32. *Miner*, 16 March, 13 Aug. 1904
33. *Sun*, 3, 24 June 1904, 6 Oct. 1905
34. *Sun*, 18 Nov. 1904; *NZ Standard*, 4 April 1940
35. *Sun*, 6 April 1906
36. *Sun*, 2 June 1905
37. *Sun*, 8 Aug. 1899
38. *Sun*, 22 Feb. 1901
39. *Miner*, 3 Feb. 1904
40. *Miner*, 16 Nov. 1904
41. *NZ Worker*, 6 Dec. 1933, and correspondence with Barry Deas of Rutherglen
42. Minutes, foundation meeting of the Political Labor Council, 7 Feb. 1901, La Trobe State Library. For the general political scene in Victoria during this period, see D. W. Rawson, 'Victoria', in Loveday, Martin and Parker, *The Emergence of the Australian Party System*, pp. 44–16. See also Humphrey McQueen, 'Victoria', in Murphy, *Labor in Politics*, pp. 291–339.
43. Goodrich, 'The Labor Movement in New Countries', Ch. IV, p. 23
44. *Tocsin*, 2 Oct. 1897 (first issue) to 23 Oct. 1906 (when it changed its name to *Labor Call*). There is a short history of *Tocsin* in *Labor Call*, 23 April 1914.
45. Ben Tillett, *Memories and Reflections*, London, 1931, p. 193, cit. Graeme Osborne, 'Tom Mann: His Australasian Experience 1902–10', unpub. PhD thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 1972, p. 24. See also Osborne's work-in-progress seminar on the same topic, 27 March 1969, O'FP, ANL 6265, box 14, folio 10. Unfortunately, Mann's own papers on the period 1902–10 were lost when the ship taking them to England sank.
46. Ken Coates in his preface to Mann's *Memoirs*, p. vi
47. George D. Meudell, 'The History of the Kyabram Reform League, 1902', Scrapbook, La Trobe State Library of Victoria, MS. 9558, Box 1143/1. See also Mann's *Memoirs*, p. 143, and Osborne, 'Tom Mann', pp. 50–1. In 1903 Meudell published an autobiography entitled *The Pleasant Career of a Spendthrift*.
48. Osborne, 'Tom Mann', p. 79
49. Ibid., pp. 79–80
50. Ibid., pp. 53–4; *Tocsin*, 13 Aug. 1903
51. *Bendigo Advertiser*, 20 March 1903, cit. Osborne, 'Tom Mann', p. 62. See also PLC Central Executive minutes, 4 April 1903.
52. *Sun*, 18 Aug. 1903

53. *Miner*, 20 Feb. 1904; *Sun*, 23 Feb., 20 Dec. 1904
54. *Sun*, 23 Feb. 1904
55. *NZ Worker*, 6 Dec. 1933; PLC Central Executive minutes, 7 Jan. 1905; *Tocsin*, 26 Jan. 1905; Merriefield cards on ALP branches
56. PLC Central Executive minutes, 1905–6, esp. 4 Feb., 1 June, 16 Sept., 14 Oct. 1905, 20 Jan., 3 Feb. 1906; *Tocsin*, 27 July 1905; *Sun*, 7 July 1905
57. *Labor Call*, 4 April 1907; *Miner*, 17 April 1907
58. *Sun*, 13 May 1904, 16 June 1905
59. *Sun*, 15 June 1906
60. *Sun*, 10 March 1903, 26 July 1904. A number of co-operatives were formed in 1906, at Wangaratta and Melbourne as well as at Rutherglen. *Sun*, 11, 15 May 1906; *Socialist*, 17 Aug. 1907
61. *Sun*, 15, 29 May, 1 June 1906. In June 1906 a Socialist Co-operative Trading Society was established in Melbourne under the direction of Mann's friend, H. H. Champion, and a co-operative store opened in August 1907, eight months after Savage opened the Rutherglen co-operative bakery. See Osborne, 'Tom Mann', p. 128.
62. *Sun*, 15 June 1906
63. *Sun*, 24 July 1906
64. *Argus*, 20 Feb. 1893
65. *Sun*, 11 Sept., 16 Oct. 1906
66. *Sun*, 18 June 1907
67. *Sun*, 12 Feb., 18 June 1907
68. *Sun*, 18 June 1907
69. Ibid.; also *Miner*, 2 Feb. 1907
70. Cowen, *Sir Isaac Isaacs*, esp. pp. 90–6 and 111–2
71. *Rutherglen and Wahgunyah News*, 1 April 1901
72. *Tocsin*, 17 May 1906
73. PLC Central Executive minutes, 29 Sept. 1906
74. Ibid., 27 Oct. 1906
75. Ibid., 13, 27 Oct. 1906; *Sun*, 19 Oct. 1906; *Miner*, 20, 31 Oct. 1906
76. PLC Central Executive letter to all branches, 1 Feb. 1905, detailing procedure for selecting candidates; *Miner*, 20, 31 Oct. 1906; *Sun*, 30 Oct. 1906; *Tocsin*, 1 Nov. 1906
77. *Sun*, 23 Oct. 1906
78. *Sun*, 7 Dec. 1906
79. *Sun*, 30 Nov. 1906
80. *Sun*, 14 Nov. 1906
81. *Sun*, 11 Dec. 1906
82. *Miner*, 3 Oct. 1906
83. Ibid.
84. *Bulletin*, cit. *Miner*, 12 Jan. 1907; also *Tocsin*, 27 Dec. 1906
85. Hughes and Graham, *Voting for the Victorian Legislative Assembly 1890–1964*, pp. 63 (1900 election), 83 (1902), 96 (1904), 107 (1907). Bowser held the seat until his retirement in 1929, often unopposed and for his last two terms as a Country Party MLA.
86. *Narandera Ensign*, 24 Nov. 1899
87. *Sun*, 6 May 1904
88. *Sun*, 27 May 1904
89. *Labor Call*, 31 Jan. 1907
90. *Sun*, 8 Feb. 1907. The other two nominees were J. Wrout and W. C. Miller, both of Melbourne.
91. *Sun*, 22 Feb. 1907
92. *Miner*, 16, 20 Feb. 1907

93. *Miner*, 27 Feb. 1907; *Sun*, 26 Feb. 1907
94. PLC Central Executive minutes, 2 Feb. 1907
95. *Miner*, 27 Feb. 1907
96. PLC Central Executive minutes and correspondence, 2 March 1907
97. PLC Central Executive minutes and correspondence, 26 Feb., 2, 16 March 1907; 1907 Central Executive Report in PLC annual conference minutes 1907; *Miner*, 9 March 1907
98. *Labor Call*, 7 March 1907
99. PLC Central Executive minutes, 7 April 1906
100. *Tocsin*, 19 April 1907
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid.
104. *Labor Call*, 6 June 1907
105. 1907 conference report in *Labor Call*, 4 April 1907
106. Ibid.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid., PLC annual conference minutes 1907; *Socialist*, 6 April 1907
109. *Labor Call*, 4 April 1907
110. Ibid.; *Socialist*, 6 April 1907, which lists Savage, Ahern and Scott Bennett in minority
111. *Socialist*, 15 June 1907; minutes Victorian Socialist Party, 18 July 1907, Merriefield Collection, La Trobe State Library of Victoria
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. P. Nye, cit. *Miner*, 26 Feb. 1905. In an earlier letter, *Miner*, 25 June 1904, Nye, writing from Burnett's Face near Westport, had extolled the New Zealand climate, mines, government, land settlement policies, railways, pay, Arbitration Court, and the wearing of shorts. The only problem he noted was the odd earthquake. There were many Victorians on New Zealand's West Coast and several Victorian rules football teams had been formed.
115. *NZ Standard*, 4 April 1940; *NZ Tatler*, 18 Oct. 1933; *Christchurch Star-Sun*, 27 March 1940
116. *Sun*, 10 Sept. 1907; *Miner*, 11 Sept. 1907
117. *Sun*, 10 Sept. 1907. The co-operative continued for a number of years afterwards, but within a few months the PLC branch at North Prentice was inactive. See letter from Mrs Robina [*sic*] Savage, North Prentice, to PLC Central Executive, PLC Central Executive minutes, 11 Jan. 1908.

V BEER BARRELS AND SOAP-BOXES, 1907–14

1. Arrivals in Wellington October 1907, National Archives SS 1/500 No 5. Savage's age and place of origin are incorrectly recorded in these archives. Also T. Lovell-Smith, Archivist, Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand, and Allison Buchan, Alexander Turnbull Library, to author, 26 May 1983. In a number of newspaper biographies of Savage, his date of arrival in New Zealand is incorrectly given as Labour Day 1906, e.g. *Dominion*, 28 March 1940, but in others it is correctly recorded as Labour Day 1907, e.g. *NZ Tatler*, 18 Oct. 1933.
2. R. Arnold, 'Some Australasian Aspects of New Zealand Life, 1890–1913', *NZJH* 4:1, April 1970, pp. 56, 60. During the period 1901–6 New Zealand had a net gain of 42 000 migrants from Australia, and the number of Australian-born in New Zealand rose from 26 991 to 47 256.
3. E. Brown, 'Salute to Michael Joseph Savage', p. 2/22

4. Savage address to Trade Union Club dinner chaired by Ben Tillett about 12 June 1937 during Savage's visit to Britain. NPP/TMS 1096/61.
5. *NZ Worker*, 18 Oct. 1933 and *NZ Tatler*, 18 Oct. 1933
6. *Standard*, 16 June 1938
7. Ibid.
8. *NZ Tatler*, 18 Oct. 1933
9. Most of the information concerning the French family in this chapter, unless stated otherwise, was provided in an interview by Mrs Aruba Alfrey (née French) on 26 August 1980 and subsequent visits and correspondence
10. Information on Savage and the Captain Cook Brewery came from the published recollections of Hon. E. R. Davis, *A Link with the Past*, p. 94; *NZ Herald*, 28 March 1940; *NZ Tatler*, 18 Oct. 1933; *Encyclopedia of New Zealand: Auckland Provincial District*, pp. 33–34; Mrs Molly Carr (née Davis), the daughter of Sir Ernest Davis (interview 23 March 1983); Mr Alan Sawbridge, who worked at the Captain Cook Brewery 1929–76 and whose father, Mr William Thomas Sawbridge, the head brewer at the Captain Cook 1897–1940, was the person who actually employed Savage and supervised his work (interview 24 May 1983).
11. Davis, *A Link with the Past*, p. 94
12. Ibid.
13. For a brief summary of the disintegration of the Liberal Party, see Barry Gustafson, 'The Decline of the Liberals', *New Zealand's Heritage*, 5:70, 1972, pp. 1951–5. Two more detailed analyses are R. K. Newman, 'Liberal Policy and the Left Wing 1908–11', unpub. MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1965, and R. T. Shannon, 'The Decline and Fall of the Liberal Government, 1908–1914', unpub. thesis University of New Zealand (Auckland), 1953. For a detailed description and analysis of the formation of the NZ Labour Party, see Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence*. Also Brown, *The Rise of New Zealand Labour*, and O'Farrell, 'The Foundation of the New Zealand Labour Party', *Historical Studies* 10:38, May 1962.
14. *Conference Report*, 1910, pp. 46–8, and *Social Democrat*, 7 July 1911
15. *MW*, 21 July 1911
16. Information and quotes in this paragraph from *Commonweal*, April, May, June, July, Aug., Nov. 1908, March 1909
17. Ibid., Aug. 1908 and March 1909
18. Ibid., Nov. 1908. Miss Powell arrived in Auckland from Sydney on 5 Oct. 1908. She was twenty-seven years of age and had been born in NSW, according to the passenger list of the *Victoria*. A Miss Powell, aged twenty-six from NSW, had also arrived in Auckland on the *Zealandia* on 6 Oct. 1907, three days before Savage's arrival in New Zealand. National Archives SS1/123 and SS1/119, and Ellen Ellis, National Archives, to author, 18 Oct. 1983.
19. E. C. Fry, *Tom Barker and the I.W.W.*, Australian Society for the Study of Labor History, Canberra, 1965
20. Ibid., p. 9
21. *MW*, 3 Nov. 1911
22. Thomas Bloodworth, discussion with the author, 1968
23. NZSP (Auckland Branch), report and balance-sheet for half-year ending 16 June 1910, PP 277; *Social Democrat*, 15 Dec. 1911
24. Barker ('Spanwire'), *MW*, 17 May 1912. For comment on Savage's speaking ability, see *Social Democrat*, 22 Dec. 1911.
25. Savage to manager *MW*, cit. *MW*, 22 Oct. 1913
26. NZSP membership card, PP 674, and pledge in NZSP *Constitution and Rules* 1912, SPP 62. For useful discussions of ideological influences on the early Labour movement in New Zealand, see H. Roth, 'American Influences on the New Zealand Labour Movement', *Historical Studies* 9:36, May 1961; and Jack Vowles,

'Ideology and the Formation of the New Zealand Labour Party', *NZJH* 16:1, April 1982.

27. Joseph Dietzgen. b. near Cologne, Germany, 1828. d. Chicago, USA, 1888. Tanner. Became a socialist after reading the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and was an active agitator during the 1848 revolution. Spent 1849–51 and 1859–69 in Russia. Corresponded with Feuerbach and commended by Marx in the preface of *Capital*. Wrote a number of books and essays, notably *The Nature of Human Brain Work* (1869), *The Religion of Social Democracy* (1870–75), *Ethics of Social Democracy* (1875), *Social Democratic Philosophy* (1876), *The Limits of Cognition* (1877), *Letters on Logic* (1880–83) and *The Positive Outcome of Philosophy* (1887). Went to United States of America for third time in 1884 and became chief editor of the Socialist Publishing Society and editor of the *Chicagoer Arbeiterzeitung* following the arrest of its previous editors in connection with the Haymarket bomb explosion of 1886.
28. *MW*, 26 May 1911 for description and history of *The Appeal to Reason*
29. Ibid., 21 July and 22 Dec. 1911
30. *Social Democrat*, 21 July 1911
31. Ibid., 22 Dec. 1911
32. *MW*, 21 July, 1 Dec. 1911
33. Ibid., 3 Nov. 1911
34. Ibid., 22 Dec. 1911
35. Ibid., 23 Feb. 1912. In the same issue Bloodworth also reports Savage's resignation and quotes Savage's use of the term 'complication of circumstances'. Bloodworth, regretting Savage's resignation and departure from Auckland, says that 'those circumstances . . . will not take him away from Socialism'.
36. *Auckland Star*, 4 March 1912. For the dispute, see J. A. Gale, 'The First Arbitrationist Trade Union: The Formation of the Auckland and Suburban Local Bodies Labourers' Union', unpub. MA thesis, University of New Zealand (Auckland), 1953, and G. W. A. Bush, *Decently and in Order*, pp. 456–8.
37. *MW*, 29 March 1912
38. Ibid., 4 April 1912
39. Ibid., John A. Lee, *Political Notebooks*, p. 18, where Fraser, according to Lee, recalls the incident. Savage certainly did not, as Lee records, leave the Socialist Party.
40. Bush, *Decently and in Order*, p. 458
41. *MW*, 26 April 1912
42. NZF of L conference report, 1912, cit. *Truth*, 29 Nov. 1919. See also the socialists' attitude to intellectuals generally, *Social Democrat*, 23 June 1911.
43. *MW*, 31 May, 7, 14 June 1912
44. *Truth*, 28 Sept. 1912
45. *MW*, 27 May 1914
46. Ibid., 3 Oct. 1913
47. NZSP (Auckland Branch) report, 16 June 1910, PP 277, and NZSP 1913 conference minutes, SPP 65
48. *MW*, 14 March 1913. See a similar comment by Ted Dye, *MW*, 17 Jan. 1913.
49. For a biography of Holland, which also reveals much about the early years of the Australian and New Zealand Labour-socialist movements and parties, see O'Farrell, *Harry Holland*.
50. Bloodworth in discussion with the author, 1968
51. *MW*, 19 Sept. 1913. For a further discussion of socialism and religion, see O'Farrell, *Harry Holland*, pp. 85–95, and O'Farrell, 'The History of the New South Wales Labour Movement, 1880–1910: A Religious Interpretation', *Journal of Religious History* 2:1, 1962.
52. Fry, *Tom Barker and the I.W.W.*, p. 14

53. *MW*, 26 Nov. 1913
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid., 25 Feb., 11 March, 1 April 1914; wage-list of fulltime SDP workers, Fraser to McCarthy, 25 March 1914, McCP I
56. Ibid., 22 July 1914
57. Ibid.
58. NZSP annual conference report, 7–9 April 1912, SPP 62
59. *MW*, 22 July 1914

VI THE PATH TO PARLIAMENT, 1914–19

1. Cit. B. Kendrick, 'Hubert Thomas Armstrong: Miner, Unionist, Politician', unpub. MA thesis, University of New Zealand (Auckland), 1950, p. 139
2. O'Farrell, *Harry Holland*, pp. 65–84, discusses this aspect. See also Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence*, pp. 105–19, for the influence of the war on the formation of the NZLP.
3. *MW*, 27 May 1915
4. Ibid., 16 Dec. 1914
5. *Truth*, 5 Dec. 1914
6. *MW*, 27 May 1914
7. Ibid., 10 Feb. 1915
8. Ibid., 14 April 1915
9. Fowlds to Savage, 23 Feb. 1915, FP
10. M. J. Savage, 'The Cost of Living and the Minimum Wage', unpub. MS., 17 July 1915, TMS 1742/1
11. Irving Fisher. b. New York 1867. d. 1947. Educated at Yale, where he gained every prize for mathematics. Graduated PhD 1891 with thesis, 'Mathematical Investigations in the Theory of Value and Prices'. In 1895 switched from Yale's Mathematics Dept. to its Dept. of Political Economy. Member Yale Socialist Club 1911. Strong crusader to stabilise the purchasing power of money, for world peace, and for US membership of the League of Nations. Active in establishing the US Department of Health. In 1913 founded the Index Visible Company to manufacture his own invention of a card index system. The company later became the Remington Rand Company. In 1929 Fisher lost a fortune of about $10,000,000 during the Wall Street crash when his shares in Remington fell from $58 to $1 each. Author of twenty-nine books, including *Appreciation and Interest* (1896), *The Nature of Capital and Income* (1906), *The Rate of Interest* (1907), *Elementary Principles of Economics* (1910), *The Purchasing Power of Money* (1911), *Why is the Dollar Shrinking* (1915), *Stabilizing the Dollar* (1920), *League or War* (1923), *The Money Illusion* (1928), *The Theory of Interest* (1930), *The Stock Market Crash and After* (1930), *Booms and Depressions* (1932).
12. *MW*, 17 Nov. 1915
13. Savage to Fraser, 3 Sept. 1914, McAP A 139/2
14. E.g. *MW*, 1 Aug 1913, report of Savage addressing 'a monster anti-militarist demonstration' of about 1000 persons at the bottom of Queen Street. Also *MW*, 22 Oct. 1913, report of Savage, Webb and Scott Bennett speaking against CMT.
15. Ibid., 19 Aug. 1914
16. Ibid., 3 March 1915
17. Ibid., 15 Sept. 1915
18. Ibid., 14 June 1916
19. Ibid., 26 July 1916
20. Ibid., 21 Sept. 1921
21. S. R. Strachan, Senior Archivist, National Archives of NZ, to author, 10 Feb.

1981, and *NZ Gazette*, 3 Sept. 1917, no. 137, p. 3399. Savage's military number was 54151 and he was recorded as a brewery employee of 63 O'Neill Street, Ponsonby.

22. *MW*, 3 Oct. 1917
23. Ibid., 11 Oct. 1916
24. Ibid., 18 July 1917
25. Ibid.
26. Interviews with Mrs Aruba Alfrey (née French), 26 Aug. 1980; Mervyn Lusty, who as a child was a neighbour in Wanganui Ave, 8 April 1981; and Mrs Maurneene Smith (née Stove), who grew up next door in Salisbury St, 9 Dec. 1984. See also Eddie Mansfield, cit. Jack Leigh, 'We could do with a Savage now', *Auckland Star*, 1 Sept. 1981.
27. Alf French to Rowland Savage, 24 April 1940
28. *MW*, 3 July 1918. For the UF of L conference, see *MW*, 10 July 1918, and for the industrial conscription conference, see *MW*, 17 July 1918.
29. Davis, *A Link with the Past*, pp. 99, 100, 102, 196; interview with Mrs Carr, 23 March 1983
30. For the 1918 NZLP conference reports, see *MW*, 17, 24, 31 July 1918.
31. Savage to Paul, 12 Sept. 1918, PP 488; also Paul to Holland 12 Sept. 1918; Holland to Paul, 6 Sept. 1918; Glover to Paul, 6 Sept. 1918, PP 488
32. Linda Bryder, 'The 1918 Influenza Epidemic in Auckland', unpub. MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1980
33. *MW*, 20 Nov. 1918
34. Interview with Mrs Aruba Alfrey, 26 Aug. 1980
35. E.g. *Auckland Star*, 5, 7, 11, 14, 20, 21 Nov. 1918
36. Ibid., 28 April 1919
37. *MW*, 12 Feb. 1919
38. Minutes, ACC, 15 and 29 May 1919
39. Minutes, AHCAB, 20 May 1919
40. *MW*, 18 June and 2 July 1919; David Wilson, interviewed by Keith Sinclair, 11 Jan. 1971; Thomas Bloodworth, discussion with author 1968. The other six seats allocated in order were Auckland East (Bob Way), Grey Lynn (Freddy Bartram), Manukau (Rex Mason), Eden (Oscar McBrine), Parnell (Tom Bloodworth), Roskill (George Davis). Bloodworth told the author in 1968 that in the preferential vote for the eight candidates he had come first and Savage second but that Bloodworth had not drawn a seat he could win. Mason, in an interview recorded by Radio NZ Sound Archives, n.d. T701-3, said that the twenty-three people nominated entered the ballot for all eight seats, which were decided in order of desirability, the successful nominee dropping out of contention for the subsequent seats. Bartram got Grey Lynn because everyone expected the independent Labour MP, Payne, to stand again, splitting the Labour vote. Payne did not and Bartram won.
41. For 1919 NZLP conference reports, see *MW*, 9 July–13 Aug. 1919.
42. Ibid., 23 July 1919
43. Ibid., 13 Aug. 1919
44. *MW*, 23 July 1919
45. For details of the policy, see Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence*, p. 144.
46. For the debate on immigration, see *MW*, 13 Aug. 1919. A general survey of the topic is given by G. R. Warburton, 'The Attitudes and Policies of the New Zealand Labour Movement Towards Non-European Immigration 1878–1928, unpub. MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1982.
47. E.g. Scott Bennett had been the only opponent of the racial purity clause at the 1905 Australian Labour Party conference, according to H. McQueen, *Social*

Sketches of Australia, 1888–1975, p. 116, cit. Warburton, 'The Attitudes and Policies of the New Zealand Labour Movement', p. 112. See also Scott Bennett, *Voice of Labour*, 2 June 1911.

48. Paul to Savage, 10 Oct. 1919, PP 488. For the 1919 election, see Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence*, pp. 140–52.
49. Savage to Paul, 13 Oct. 1919, PP 488
50. Savage to Paul, 14 Oct. 1919, PP 488; Paul to Savage, 17 Oct. 1919, PP 488; G. McCully and O. Berglind to Savage, 18 Sept. 1919, PP 66
51. *MW*, 18 June 1918, 18 Feb. 1920; *Auckland Star*, 19 Feb. 1919; O'Farrell, *Harry Holland*, p. 108; Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence* pp. 146–7
52. *Auckland Star*, 14 Nov. 1919
53. *NZ Herald*, 14 Nov. 1919
54. *Auckland Star*, 28 Nov. 1919
55. *Truth*, 23 Aug. 1919. Robert Green Ingersoll. b. 1833, d. 1899. An American lawyer renowned for his oratory and his lectures against orthodox religion. Made the speech nominating James Blaine as candidate for President of the United States at the Republican Party Convention 1876.
56. *MW*, 3 Dec. 1919
57. *Truth*, 29 Nov. 1919

VII THE MEMBER FOR AUCKLAND WEST, 1919–28

1. *MW*, 6 Oct. 1920
2. Holland, *MW* 13 May 1925. Holland, himself, was one of those who experienced such hardship throughout his parliamentary career.
3. PLP caucus minutes, 24 June 1920–27 July 1928, TMS 270/11. Notes taken from these manuscript minutes are also found in O'FP, ANL 6265, B7, F50, and TMS 1501.
4. *Truth*, 16 Dec. 1922, 10 Feb. 1923
5. Ibid., 10 Feb., 3 March 1923
6. O'Farrell, *Harry Holland*, p. 138
7. Leila Ivar (née Holland) to O'Farrell, 5 April 1958; Roy Holland to O'Farrell, 30 Sept. 1958, O'FP, ANL 6265, B9, F2
8. O'Farrell, *Harry Holland*, p. 121
9. E.g. Mervyn Lusty, a neighbour in Wanganui Avenue, who was later director of Auckland University's Centre for Continuing Education and who knew Savage and the French family well, interview 8 April 1981; E. R. Eady, who worked with Savage in the Radio Listeners' League, interview 11 June 1982
10. Cit. O'Farrell, *Harry Holland*, p. 138
11. *MW*, 1 Dec. 1920
12. Ibid., 22 March and 22 Nov. 1922
13. Ibid., 28 April 1920
14. Ibid., 13 Oct. 1920
15. Ibid., 18 May, 20 July 1921, 25 Jan., 8 Feb. 1922
16. *Otago Witness*, 13 July 1920
17. *Dominion*, 18 Dec. 1919
18. *PD*, 1922, v. 197, p. 607
19. Ibid., 1920, v. 186, pp. 211 ff.
20. Ibid., 1922, v. 195, p. 495
21. Ibid., 1920, v. 186, p. 216
22. Ibid., 1921, v. 190, p. 218; 1922, v. 199, p. 116
23. PLP caucus minutes, 7 July 1925, TMS 270/11
24. Ibid., __ July 1924, TMS 270/11

25. *Auckland Star*, 20 April 1920
26. For the debate, see *PD*, 1920, v. 186, 187, and Warburton, 'The Attitudes and Policies of the New Zealand Labour Movement Towards Non-European Immigrants' pp. 142 ff.
27. *PD*, 1926, v. 209, p. 1095
28. Ibid., 1923, v. 200, p. 421
29. Ibid., 1920, v. 186, p. 215
30. Ibid., 1920, v. 189, p. 920
31. Ibid., pp. 745 ff.
32. Ibid., p. 747
33. Ibid., 1922, v. 197, p. 607
34. Ibid., 1922, v. 196, p. 409
35. Ibid., 1926, v. 210, pp. 595 and 599
36. Ibid., pp. 591 ff., and Royal Commission of Inquiry, *Social Security in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1972, p. 44
37. Cit. 1927 conference report, TMS 270/349; *MW*, 8 June 1927
38. *MW*, 10 Oct. 1923
39. *PD*, 1924, v. 204, p. 172; also 1920, v. 187, p. 613; 1922, v. 195, p. 649; 1923, v. 200, p. 656, v. 201, p. 366
40. Ibid., 1927, v. 213, p. 1103
41. ACC minutes, 29 May 1919
42. Ibid., 7 Aug. 1919
43. Bush, *Decently and in Order*, pp. 230–1
44. ACC minutes, 7 Aug. 1919
45. Ibid., 23 March, 27 July, 10 Aug., 13 Dec. 1922; Savage to Eileen Brown, 25 Nov. 1933
46. AHCAB minutes, 17 April 1923
47. Ibid., 23 and 20 May 1919
48. Ibid., 17 June 1919
49. Ibid., 20 Jan., 11 May 1920; comments by W. Wallace, chairman of the Board, cit. *Auckland Star*, 27 March 1940
50. AHCAB minutes, 28 April 1920
51. Ibid., 19 July 1921, 20 Feb. 1923
52. Ibid., 19 July 1921
53. *Truth*, 17 March 1923
54. John A. Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, p. 27
55. *MW*, 9 Nov. 1921
56. *PD*, 1923, v. 200, p. 419
57. *MW*, 13 June 1923; also 30 May, 6 June 1923
58. *Matamata Record*, 24 May 1923, cit. B. D. Graham, 'Waikato Politics', unpub. MA thesis, University of New Zealand (Auckland), 1951, p. 299
59. *MW*, 19 Dec. 1923
60. Ibid., 6 Feb., 12, 19 March 1924
61. NZLP Executive minutes, 2 Dec. 1925
62. *MW*, 18 March 1925
63. NZLP Executive minutes, 18 May 1925
64. Savage to National Office, 21 May 1925, and Fraser to Savage, 23 May 1925, O'FC, TMS 1501, F2, and O'FP, ANL 6265, B5, F34
65. *MW*, 27 May 1925; Lee to Nash, 4 June 1925, O'FC, TMS 1501, F2
66. *MW*, 10 June 1925
67. Lee to Nash, 4 June 1925, O'FC, TMS 1501, F2
68. Labour's vote in 1925 in fifty-six seats was 184 616 compared to 145 148 in the forty seats contested in 1922. Labour lost Wellington East (Monteith), Napier (McIlvride), Waimarino (Langstone), Dunedin North (Munro), Lyttelton

(McCombs) and Westland (O'Brien). McCombs and O'Brien lost their seats on the casting votes of their returning officers. O'Brien failed by twelve votes to retain his seat on an electoral petition but the Court gave McCombs a final majority of eleven votes.

69. Lee to Nash, 10 March 1926, O'FP, ANL 6265, B5, F34
70. Nash, cit., *MW*, 20 April 1927
71. *MW*, 7 July 1926
72. Savage to Eileen Brown (née Savage), 24 July 1926, TMS 1361, F2
73. Aruba Alfrey (née French), interview, 26 Aug. 1980
74. Ibid.; C. W. Carrick, 'N.Z.'s Bachelor Labour Leader', *NZ Observer*, 3 Oct. 1935, refers to this persistent rumour.
75. Savage in his foreword to J. T. Paul, *Our Majority and the After Years 1889–1939*, Dunedin, 1939
76. 1925 conference report, p. 22, TMS 270/350. See also 1924 conference report and NZLP Executive minutes, 13 April 1925.
77. Savage to Nash, 11 May 1926, O'FC, TMS 1501, F21
78. 1928 conference report
79. NZLP Executive minutes, 2 Feb. 1927
80. Savage to Nash, 22 Feb. 1929, O'FC, TMS 1501, F2, and O'FP, ANL 6265, B5, F35
81. Extracts from these letters were printed in the *MW*, 20 Oct., 10 Nov., 1, 8, 15 Dec. 1926
82. Savage to Eileen Brown, 28 Oct. 1926
83. Savage to Eileen Brown, 28 Jan. 1927
84. Savage to Nash, *MW*, 1 Dec. 1926
85. Ibid.
86. NZLP Executive minutes, 26 Oct. 1926, discussion of Savage's report
87. *MW*, 26 Jan. 1927
88. NZLP Executive minutes, 2 Feb. 1927
89. Savage to Eileen Brown, 28 Jan. 1927
90. AHCAB minutes, 17 May 1927; *MW*, 4 May 1927
91. The committee had been set up at the 1926 conference in Wanganui. Reports of committee meetings 26, 27 March 1927 and final proposals presented to the conference, TMS 270/349, and 1927 conference report. For the report and the debate on it, see also *MW*, 1 June 1927.
92. E.g. 1929 conference report, TMS 270/351
93. Savage to Eileen Brown, 28 Jan. 1927
94. Ibid.
95. The finance committee was Savage, Nash and Semple. The policy committee was Savage, Fraser, Nash, Holland, Thorn, Brindle, W. Atkinson, J. Roberts and W. Bromley. The 1928 policy is in the TMS 270/351 and NZLP National Executive minutes, 4 May 1927. For the 1928 election, see R. M. Chapman, 'The Significance of the 1928 General Election', unpub. MA thesis, University of New Zealand (Auckland), 1948, and R. M. Chapman, *The Political Scene 1919–31*.
96. 1928 policy, TMS 270/351; NZLP Executive minutes, 4 May 1927
97. TMS 270/350. This committee consisted of Holland, Savage, Nash, J. Roberts and G. T. Koller.
98. NZLP Executive minutes, 7 June 1928
99. *Stead's Review*, Nov. 1928, O'FP, ANL 6265, B8, F55
100. Savage to Nash, 22 Oct. 1928, O'FP, ANL 6265, B5, F35
101. Auckland West: Savage (L) 5361, Speirs (U) 4020, Adeane (R) 2021. Lee was defeated by 37 votes and Bartram by 64 votes.
102. Lee and Bartram were defeated. Munro, Barnard, Carr, Semple, Chapman, Langstone and O'Brien won seats.

1. O'Farrell, *Harry Holland*, pp. 165–83; Lee to O'Farrell, 13 Jan. [1958], O'FP, ANL 6265, B9, F4
2. 1927 conference report, O'FP, ANL 6265, B6, F41
3. Savage to Nash, 13 Feb. 1928, and Nash to Savage, 16 Feb. 1928, O'FP, ANL 6265, B5, F35
4. Mrs Agnes Forman (née Holland) to O'Farrell, n.d. [c. 1958], O'FP, ANL 6265, B9, F2. The description of Holland's voice was given by Lee in his obituary of Holland, *NZ Worker*, 8 Nov. 1933.
5. F. J. Riley to O'Farrell, 31 July 1957, TMS 1501, F15
6. H. G. R. Mason, MP, interview with O'Farrell, 14 Jan. 1958, O'FP, ANL 6265, B9, F2
7. *PD*, 1929, v. 221, pp. 332–3
8. Savage to Lee, __ 1929, reproduced in Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, pp. 163–4; Savage to Nash, 12 Feb. 1930, and Jordan to Nash, 24 Jan. 1930, TMS 1501, F3
9. Savage to Forbes, 8 May 1930, cit. *MW*, 14 May 1930
10. NZLP Executive minutes, 25 Aug. 1930
11. *MW*, 3 Dec. 1930; Savage to Holland, 30 Jan. 1931, O'FP, ANL 6265, B2, F10, and TMS 1501, F7; Holland to Fraser, 30 Jan. 1931, TMS 270/33
12. Savage to Nash, 30 Jan. 1931, O'FP, ANL 6265, B5, F35, and TMS 1501, F3
13. Savage to Nash, 20 Feb. 1931, TMS 1501, F3, and O'FP, ANL 6265, B5, F35. For social work and the Depression in Auckland, see A. Ashton-Peach, 'The Social Effects of the Depression in Auckland 1930–35', unpub. MA research essay, University of Auckland, 1971, and Graham Bean, 'Church Social Work in Auckland During the Depression Years 1930–34', unpub. MA research essay, University of Auckland, 1975.
14. AHCAB minutes, 26 April 1932
15. *MW*, 18 April, 9 May 1928
16. Ibid., 11 June 1930
17. AHCAB minutes, __ April, 16 Dec. 1930, 20 Jan., 17 Feb. 1931, 25 May, 21 June 1932, 21 March, 19 Sept. 1933
18. Ibid., 5, 19 July 1932
19. Ibid., 19 Sept. 1933; also 2, 20 June, 18 July 1933
20. Ibid., 18 July 1933
21. Ibid., 19 Sept. 1933
22. Ibid., 16, 30 April 1935
23. Interview, Mrs Aruba Alfrey (née French), 26 Aug. 1980
24. Interview, Mrs Molly Langstone (née Nolan), 13 Sept. 1983
25. *MW*, 15 March 1933
26. Mary Ann Cowling to Savage, 5 Nov. 1932, O'FP, ANL 6265, B8, F54
27. W. Davis to Savage, 16 Sept. 1932, ibid.
28. 'Sorely Tried' to Savage, 7 Nov. 1932, ibid.
29. *PD*, 1931, v. 230, p. 661; also 1927, v. 213, pp. 686, 690, 693, v. 214 p. 160; 1932, v. 233, p. 642
30. Interview with E. R. Eady, 11 June 1982. 1ZR was eventually closed down by the government on a technicality.
31. Interview with Mrs May O'Donoghue (née Savage), 10 Feb. 1980
32. *Dominion*, 19 Sept. 1931
33. Savage to Eileen Brown, 29 Oct. 1933
34. Interview, Mrs Aruba Alfrey, 26 Aug. 1980
35. Elizabeth French to NZLP Executive, NZLP Executive minutes, 5 Jan. 1932
36. Jordan to Nash, 29 Jan. 1932, TMS 1501, F3, and O'FP, ANL 6265, B5, F35
37. 1932 conference report, TMS 270/354

38. Savage to Eileen Brown, 29 Oct. 1933
39. Ibid., and Professor C. Tasman-Jones, Dept. of Medicine, University of Auckland, to author, 12 Oct. 1984
40. Interview, Aruba Alfrey, 26 Aug. 1980
41. Savage to Thorn, 10 July 1933. See also Barnard to Thorn, 11 July 1933, NP 2545; NZLP Executive minutes, 4, 13, 28 July, 9 Nov. 1933. FSU document and Labour's reaction to it are discussed in *NZ Worker*, 2 May 1934.
42. Keynes, John Maynard (Lord Keynes of Tilton from 1942). b. 1883. d. 1946. Longtime Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and principal Treasury representative at the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference. Saw deficit budgetting as answer to underconsumption and economic depression. Author of numerous works, including *Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1920), *Tract on Monetary Reform* (1924), *The End of Laissez-faire* (1926), *Treatise on Money* (1930), *Means to Prosperity* (1933), and *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1935).
43. Hobson, John Atkinson, b. 1858. d. 1954. Journalist, lecturer, author. Considerable influence on the thinking and policies of both Liberal and Labour Parties in Britain. In 1926 the British ILP adopted *Socialism in Our Time*, a document drawn up by a committee chaired by Hobson. Wrote fifty-three books including *Evolution of Modern Capitalism* (1894), *John Ruskin* (1898), *Imperialism* (1902), *The Industrial System* (1920), *The Science of Wealth* (1911), *Gold, Prices and Wages* (1913), *Work and Wealth* (1914), *Incentives in the New Industrial Order* (1922), *God and Mammon* (1931), *Poverty in Plenty 1931)*, *The Modern State* (1931), and *Confessions of an Economic Heretic* (1938). Savage was acquainted not only directly with Hobson's work but also indirectly through Bellamy, whose *Equality* (1897) strongly reflected Hobson's early views on underconsumption. Holland too had many of Hobson's books in his library, and also Fisher's *Money Illusion* and Soddy's *Money versus Man*. See list of books from Holland's library prepared by his son Roy, O'FC, ANL 6265, B9, F5. For a full discussion of Hobson's influence on the NZLP, see Robin M. Oliver, 'Ideology, the Slump, and the New Zealand Labour Party: A Study of the Ideology of the NZLP in the 1930s', unpub. MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1981.
44. Soddy, Professor Frederick, MA, FRS. b. 1877. d. 1956. Lecturer, Glasgow University, 1904–14; Professor of Chemistry, Aberdeen University, 1914–19; Lees Professor of Physical Chemistry, Oxford University, 1919–36; Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, 1921. Collaborated with Rutherford at McGill University in pioneering work on radium. Responsible for discovery of isotopes and originated theories of atomic disintegration and radioactivity. Member British committee on chemical warfare. Member British Labour Party and his views on 'the stupendous iniquity of usury' were published in *NZ Worker* during the early 1920s. Author of various books on economics, notably *Money versus Man* (1931), described as a 'blend of high moral indignation and careful scientific enquiry'. Views very similar to the theories of Irving Fisher, whose writings Soddy cited in support of his own. Very critical of the arbitrary powers of private banks to issue and charge interest on new money in excess of their savings deposits and also to withdraw such credit.
45. Douglas, Major Clifford Hugh. b. 1879. d. 1952. An engineer and graduate of Cambridge University. Senior engineering and managerial posts in India, Argentine, and England. Believed that underconsumption explained by his A + B theory, i.e., that there exists a permanent deficiency between purchasing power from wages, salaries and dividends, on the one hand, and commodities or production that incorporates costs additional to that purchasing power on the other hand. The 'gap', Douglas argued, should be removed by the issue of credit through a central banking system. His theories became known as 'Douglas Credit' or 'Social Credit'. Numerous publications, notably *Economic Democracy*

(1919) and *The Control and Distribution of Production* (1922). Visited New Zealand on a lecturing tour in early 1934 and became economic adviser to the government of Alberta in 1935.

46. *PD* 1934, v. 240, p. 887, and 1929, v. 221, pp. 16–17
47. Ibid., p. 18; 1932, v. 231, p.70
48. Ibid., 1925, v. 206, p. 535; 1927, v. 213, p. 416
49. Ibid., 1932, v. 233, p. 346
50. Ibid., 1931, v. 230, p. 31
51. Ibid., 1931, v. 228, p. 118; 1932, v. 232, p. 392; 1935, v. 241, p. 41
52. Ibid., 1927, v. 213, pp. 874–7
53. Ibid., 1930, v. 224, pp. 161–2
54. Ibid., 1932, v. 232, p. 285
55. Ibid., 1927, v. 214, p. 358; 1930, v. 224, p. 415; 1931, v. 228, pp. 258–9
56. Ibid., 1923, v. 200, p. 419
57. Ibid., 1932, v. 232, p. 508. For Keynes on the primacy of monetary policy, see his *Means to Prosperity*, cit. *Dominion*, 24 Oct. 1984.
58. Lee to Thorn, __June 1933, TMS 1501, F3
59. Holland to Mrs Ivar, 10 Oct. 1933, TMS 1501, F15
60. *MW*, 12 April 1933. See also R. Clifton, 'Douglas Credit and the Labour Party 1930–35', unpub. MA thesis, University of NZ (Wellington), 1961. For Douglas's influence on the Australian Labour Party at the same time, see Berzins, 'Douglas Credit and the A.L.P.', *Labour History* 17, June 1970.
61. *PD*, 1932, v. 234, p. 141
62. Ibid., 1933, v. 235, p. 45
63. Ibid., 1933, v. 236, p. 637
64. Ibid., 1932, v. 232, p. 508
65. Ibid., 1933, v. 236, p. 637
66. Ibid., 1932, v. 233, p. 348
67. Ibid., 1933, v. 235, p. 458
68. Ibid., 1932, v. 233, p. 346
69. Ibid., 1931, v. 228, p. 118–9
70. Ibid., 1927, v. 212, p. 183
71. Eric Cook to secretary NZLP, 3 Oct. 1933, *NZ Worker* file, O'FP, ANL 6265, B6, F43
72. Savage to Thorn, 26 July 1932, TMS 1501, F6, and O'FP, ANL 6265, B8, F54
73. Report by Nash, NZLP Executive minutes, 4 Oct. 1932
74. NZLP Executive minutes, 5 April 1933
75. *NZ Worker*, 14 June 1933
76. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, pp. 102–3 O'Farrell, *Harry Holland*, p. 203; Olssen, *John A. Lee*, p. 63
77. NZLP Executive minutes, 23 Dec. 1930, 14 April, 18 May, 1 June 1931; 1931 conference report, TMS 270/353. Also interview with Norman Douglas, 4 Feb. 1983.
78. *NZ Worker*, 23 Dec. 1931
79. E.g. *NZ Observer*, 25 May 1933. The four companies and Lee's shareholding in them were Reliance Loan, Mortgage and Discount Corporation Ltd (175 shares); Wellington Finance Co. Ltd (850); New Guarantee Corporation (1700); and Traders Finance Corporation (1900). Lee's wife, Mollie, had 1950 shares in Reliance Loan, whose other shareholders included Barnard, his wife, and Mrs Parry. See also Hawke's Bay *Herald Tribune* and the Christchurch *Press*, 14 Oct. 1938, and the *Waimate Advocate*, 8 Oct. 1938, which showed that Lee and his wife still held their shares in Reliance Loan and that Lee had in fact increased to 2900 his shares in Traders Finance in 1937.
80. NZLP Executive minutes, 22 Dec. 1933, 18 Jan., 17 March 1934. In addition

to Papatoetoe, the Eden, Waimate and Grey branches and the Waimarino LRC were among those who expressed concern.

81. *PD*, 1933, v. 237, p. 329; Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 24 May 1938, p. 69; Lee interview 1961.
82. *Hitler*, Auckland, 1940; *Mussolini: Apostle of Violence*, Auckland, 1940
83. Nash interview, cit. Olssen, *John A. Lee*, pp. 69–70. See e.g. Lee, *Children of the Poor*, pp. 89, 124–8. Lee's own mother was upset by the portrayal and wrote her own unpublished autobiography in an effort to correct the record. See Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 21. Aug. 1939, p. 174.
84. *NZ Worker*, 29 March, 16 Aug., 13 Sept. 1933
85. E.g., ibid., 8 Feb., 8, 15 March 1933
86. Ibid., 8 Feb. 1933
87. NZLP Executive minutes, 5 April 1933, and 1933 conference report, TMS 270/355
88. *NZ Worker*, 9 Aug., 20 Sept. 1933; Holland to D. Wilson, 6 Aug. 1933, O'FP, ANL 6265, B4, F29.
89. O'Farrell, *Harry Holland*, pp. 209 ff., for account of Holland's death and assessment of his personality and contribution as Labour's leader
90. Savage to Eileen Brown, 29 Oct. 1933. For Savage's public comments, see *NZ Worker*, 11 Oct. 1933.
91. Lee to Mollie Lee, 13 Oct. 1933 (two letters), 10 Oct., 11 Oct. (three letters), 12 Oct. (three letters) 1933 (a total of nine letters), cit. Olssen, *John A. Lee*, pp. 65–6. Also Mrs Nash to Nash, 15 Oct. 1933, N75, cit. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 108.
92. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 108
93. Savage to Eileen Brown, 28 Jan. 1927
94. Savage to Eileen Brown, 25 Nov. 1933

IX 'NOW THEN!' LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, 1933–35

1. Leslie Jillett to author, 24 Aug. 1981
2. *PD*, 1933, v. 236, p. 404; *NZ Worker*, 18 Oct. 1933
3. Ibid., 1933, v. 237, pp. 205–6; *NZ Worker*, 22 Nov. 1933
4. Ibid., 1935, v. 241, p. 346
5. Savage to Eileen, 25 Nov. 1933
6. Savage to Eileen, 23 July 1934, and to Doris, 23 July 1934
7. Savage to Eileen, 28 Jan. 1927
8. Savage to Eileen, 29 Oct. 1933
9. Savage to Eileen, 8 Jan. 1934
10. Mrs Ethel McMillan, interview, 9 July 1981
11. *NZ Worker*, 24 April 1934
12. Ibid., 28 Feb. 1934
13. Savage to Eileen, 23 July 1934
14. *PD*, 1934, v. 239, p. 37
15. Ibid., 1934, v. 238, pp. 125–7
16. Ibid., 1934, v. 239, p. 536
17. *NZ Worker*, 7 Nov. 1934
18. Ibid., 1934, v. 240, p. 1128
19. *NZ Worker*, 7, 28 Nov., 12 Dec. 1934
20. Savage to NZLP Executive, 1 Dec. 1934; NZLP Executive minutes, 10 Dec. 1934; NZLP Executive report to 1935 conference, TMS 270/355
21. *NZ Worker*, 28 Nov. 1934
22. Ibid., 19 Dec. 1934
23. MPs' organising report to 1935 conference, TMS 270/355

24. Ibid..
25. *NZ Worker*, 22 May, 17 July 1935; NZ Executive minutes, 17 June 1935
26. Auckland LRC minutes, 24 Jan., 4, 7 Feb. 1935, A65, B1; NZLP Executive minutes, 13 Feb. 1935
27. F. G. Young to J. Roberts, 25 Jan. 1935; also Young to Roberts, 6, 11 Feb. 1935, RP 1/12
28. Roberts to Young, 14 Feb. 1935, RP 1/12
29. N. V. Douglas, interview, 4 Feb. 1983
30. Young to Roberts, 11 Feb. 1935, RP 1/12
31. N. V. Douglas, interview, 4 Feb. 1983
32. Young to Roberts, 11 Feb. 1935, RP 1/12
33. E. Dye to G. T. Thurston, secretary Canterbury Trades Council, 5 June 1935, and Roberts to Thurston, 17 June 1935, RP 1/13. Also *Truth*, 24 April 1935.
34. Auckland LRC minutes, 11 March 1935, A65 B1, and NZ Executive minutes, 8, 16, 20 March 1935
35. Peter Butler, interview, 14 Oct. 1981. Norman and Jenny Douglas, 4 Feb. 1983, and John Banks, 9 April 1984, who were all delegates to the LRC at that time, confirmed Butler's opinion of Sayegh though all saw him politically as 'a nice nonentity'.
36. Colonel W. N. Pharazyn, interview with Keith Sinclair, 18 Jan. 1972, and 1935 conference report, TMS 270/355
37. *MW*, 10 April 1935
38. Ward, 'Aspects of New Zealand Housing 1920–70', unpub. MA thesis, VUW, 1977, pp. 136–8
39. *Standard*, 25 Nov. 1935
40. Rev. D. M. Martin, 'The Suffering of the Unemployed', reprinted in the *NZ Worker*, 13 Feb. 1935, after having been published originally in the *Dominion*
41. W. S. Ross, Dunedin, cit. *NZ Worker*, 5 April 1933
42. *NZ Worker*, 12, 19, 26 June, 24 July 1935
43. NZLP Executive minutes, 19 June 1935
44. Sir Terence McCombs, interview, 6 July 1981
45. Fred Waite, president of the National Federation, to Coates, 8 July 1935, CP 1785/131
46. 1935 conference report, TMS 270/355
47. NZLP Executive minutes, 5 Nov. 1935; Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, pp. 111–2; M. J. Savage, *The Case for Labour*, Auckland, n.d. [1935]. The full election policy is attached as an annex to the annual report of the NZLP National Executive to the 1936 conference, TMS 270/23.
48. *Bay of Plenty Times* and *Gisborne Times*, 18 Nov., and *Auckland Star*, 22 Nov. 1935
49. *PD*, 1935, v. 243, p. 655
50. R. Campbell to Keith Sinclair, 11 Sept. 1970, TMS 190, F16
51. R. Campbell to O. S. Hintz, 8 Nov. 1943, CP 1785/15
52. A. J. Stallworthy, cit. G. G. Rollo, 'The Election of 1935 in New Zealand', unpub. MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1950, footnote 2
53. Coates to Stewart, 4 Dec. 1935, CP 1785/190
54. H. G. Livingstone, vice-president of the National Federation in Canterbury, to Coates, 10 June 1935, CP 1785/133, and 26 Oct. 1935, CP 1785/138. Livingstone favoured Holland's son, Sidney, as a successor to his father. Also Waite to Miss H. D. Montague, 6 July 1935, CP 1785/133.
55. H. H. D. Riley, organiser's report, n.d. [1935], CP 1785/139
56. E. Earle Vaile to Sir George Wilson, 15 Sept. 1935, CP 1785/139. Vaile's views were biased, Clinkard having defeated him in Rotorua in 1931.
57. Waite to Coates, 3 Aug. 1935, CP 1785/131
58. L. Alderton to R. Aikin, 30 July 1935, CP 1785/133

59. Waite to Coates, 16 May 1935, CP 1785/131
60. A. F. Green to Coates, 14 Oct. 1935, CP 1785/139
61. A. Harris to Coates, 13 March and 17 Aug. 1935, CP 1785/134
62. See M. C. Pugh, 'The New Zealand Legion and Conservative Protest in the Grea Depression', unpub. MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1969; D. G. McMillan *The New Zealand Legion*, Oamaru, 1933, which compares the legion with Germai Nazism and with the Ku Klux Klan in the United States; *NZ Worker*, 26 Apri 1933.
63. See M. C. Pugh, 'Doctrinaires on the Right', *NZJH* 17:2, Oct. 1983, pp. 103–1
64. Cit. *Bay of Plenty Times*, 18 Nov. 1935
65. 'Democrat Political Organisation', a seven-page report, n.d. [1934], CP 1785/124 'Aims and Objectives of the Democrat Political Organisation of New Zealand', n.d. [1935], CP 1785/126. The 'Planner Theorists' were Drs William Ball Sutch, Richard Mitchelson Campbell and Horace Belshaw.
66. Ibid.
67. Waite to Miss H. D. Montague, 6 July 1935, CP 1785/133. Davy, Albert E. (Bert). b. 1887. d. 1959. Campaign organiser for Reform Party 1919–26, United Party 1927–28, National Coalition 1931, Democratic Party 1935. Davy later went on to form a People's Movement in 1940 to oppose socialism and to foster a wartime coalition, and in 1942 launched an ineffectual New Zealand Co-operative Party. A onetime hairdresser, he later became manager of the *Hawkes Bay Daily Mail* and was appointed by the 1957–60 Labour Government as chairman of the Trade Practices and Prices Commission.
68. Pugh, 'Doctrinaires on the Right', pp. 114–5. The eight seats were Hauraki, Hamilton, Bay of Plenty, Rangitikei, Masterton, Wairarapa, Wairau and Mid-Canterbury. The additional four were Eden, Wanganui, Marsden and Waitaki.
69. Egmont, Wellington Suburbs, Nelson and Mataura were won by independents. The other six seats were Palmerston North, Rotorua, Gisborne, Thames, Waipawa and Waitemata.
70. Waite to Coates, 25 June 1935, CP 1785/131; Eliot Davis to Coates, 2 Aug. 1935, CP 1785/133; Rodney Coates to R. Aikin, 29 June 1935, CP 1785/133
71. Edward G. Hewitt to Coates, 15 Jan. 1934, CP 1785/129
72. Waite to Coates, 11 Sept. 1935, CP 1785/131; Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, pp. 70–1
73. Waite to Coates, 11 Sept. 1935, CP 1785/131
74. *NZ Herald*, 11 Sept. 1935, and G. Hutchison, National's publicity officer, to Coates, 11 Sept. 1935, CP 1785/133
75. In Rotorua. A. M. Shugar to B. G. Edward, 20 Sept. 1935, CP 1785/139
76. H. Kitchingham to Coates, 26 Aug. 1935, CP 1785/134
77. Waite to Coates, 1 Nov. 1935, CP 1785/131, and Sir George Wilson to Coates, 3 Oct. 1935, CP 1785/139
78. Sir Gordon Minhinnick to author, 21 July 1981, and interview with Sir Gordon Minhinnick, 1 Aug. 1981
79. J. A. Young to author, 24 Aug. 1981. Holland's attitude to Young, who was on the Parliamentary Press Gallery 1928–56 before becoming editor of the *Dominion*, may have been influenced by the fact that Young's father was Minister of Health and Internal Affairs 1925–35. See also Wilfred Mervyn Lusty interview, 8 April 1981.
80. Geoffrey Webster to Fraser, 20 May 1940, TMS 270/4
81. O. S. Hintz to author, 1 June 1981. Hintz later became editor of the *NZ Herald*.
82. Leslie Jillett to author, 24 Aug. 1981. Jillett was also in the early 1930s president of the NZ Journalists Association and chairman of the press gallery.
83. Colin Scrimgeour interview, 15 April 1981
84. For a detailed and authoritative first-hand account of this incident, see Thomas R. Clarkson, 'Reminiscences of Radio', unpub. typescript, 1981, and Clarkson

to author, 7 Aug. 1981. Also Edwards, *Scrim. Radio Rebel in Retrospect*, pp. 79–83; and Scrimgeour, Lee and Simpson, *The Scrim-Lee Papers*, pp. 41–51. Savage in 1937 read a report by the Director General of Broadcasting on this incident, *PD*, 1937, v. 249, p. 147.

85. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 117, and Rollo, 'The Election of 1935 in New Zealand', unpub. thesis, pp. 66–7
86. Sir Arnold Nordmeyer interview, 4 Dec. 1980
87. Savage to May, 8 Dec. 1935
88. Speech after Labour victory, election night 1935, Radio NZ Archives, D 468/3–4, and *Standard*, 4 Dec. 1935
89. Coates to Sir Robert Knox, 12 Dec. 1935, CP 1785/140
90. Ibid., and Coates to H. F. Nicoll, 12 Dec. 1935, CP 1785/140. See also Lee, *Socialism in New Zealand*, cit. Christchurch *Press*, 8 Oct. 1938. Savage at Thames and Invercargill, Armstrong at Waimate, and Parry at Auckland, for example, all stated during the election that, in Armstrong's words, 'The real issue of this election was monetary reform.' *Thames Star*, 19 Nov., *Southland News*, 12 Nov., *Waimate Advocate*, 13 Nov., and *Auckland Star*, 14 Nov. 1935.
91. Savage speaking about Holland when opening the latter's memorial, O'FP, ANL 6265, B9, F4. Sir Terence McCombs and Sir Arnold Nordmeyer both referred to Savage's peculiar effectiveness as a platform speaker, interviews, 6 July 1981 and 4 Dec. 1980 respectively. One of those who was embarrassed by Savage's speaking ability was the intellectual Ormond Wilson, who recollected that Savage spoke at a meeting in Marton in 1935, after which 'some friends of mine, intelligent people not committed to any political view, but who were going to vote for me on purely personal grounds' remarked, ' "Have we really got to vote for him as Prime Minister?" ' Wilson to author, 1 Aug. 1981.
92. Ibid.
93. *PD*, 1940, v. 257, p. 105
94. Carr, *Politicalities*
95. H. G. R. Mason, interview with P. J. O'Farrell, 14 Jan. 1958, O'FP, ANL 6265, B9, F2
96. Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, p. 28
97. Burns, *Leadership*, New York, 1978, pp. 42 ff. and pp. 118 ff. Burns sees three main types of leadership: transactional, transforming and moral. See also pp. 4 and 5.
98. Nordmeyer interview, 4 Dec. 1980; McCombs interview, 6 July 1981; Mason interview, 25 May 1970
99. Savage to May, 8 Dec. 1935
100. For a concise summary of Erikson's theory, see David Elkind, 'Psychology and Human Nature: Erik Erikson's Eight Ages of Man', *Dialogue* 11:1, 1978, pp. 3–13.
101. Hintz to author, 1 June 1981

X THE REAL TASK BEGINS, 1935–37

1. *Truth*, 1 May 1935. For a description of Savage's arrival in Wellington, see *Standard*, 4 Dec. 1935.
2. *Elector Vote Labour*, 20 Nov. 1935, CP, TMS 1785, F 122. Although Lee recognised the horrors of war, he was no pacifist and in 1935 could write to Ormond Burton, 'what a pity you have gone pacifist. You could pen a glorious story or two of clean men engaged in virile slaughter', which would 'make youth sigh for the days that were, when men were homeric and humanity had the right to impale humanity on sharp bayonets.' Lee to Burton, 3 Feb. 1935, BMS, TMS 438/35a.
3. Langstone, cit. Peter Butler, *NZ Times*, 4 Oct. 1981

4. Caucus minutes, 3 Dec. 1935
5. The MS. notes are in NP 2269.
6. Ethel McMillan, interview, 9 July 1981
7. Cit. *Manawatu Daily Times*, 25 Nov. 1935. Also Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 116.
8. R. M. Campbell to Sinclair, 22 Sept. 1970, 1 July 1972, TMS 1900, F16. Campbell, Richard Mitchelson, b. Auckland 1897. d. Edinburgh 1974. Graduated in law and economics, Victoria University College, Wellington. Became secretary-adviser to Prime Minister Coates, 1926. Economic adviser, NZ High Commission, London, 1935–46. Chairman Public Service Commission 1946–53. Deputy High Commissioner, London, 1953–58.
9. Howard to Stewart, 23 Dec. 1935, SP 985, 5, 118
10. Peter Butler, interview, 14 Oct. 1981
11. O'Regan diaries, 6 Dec. 1935
12. Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, p. 38; Olssen, *John A. Lee*, p. 77
13. Terence McCombs, interview, 6 July 1981
14. Caucus minutes, 3 Dec. 1935, and 1936 National Executive report, p. 5, TMS 270/23
15. The legislation establishing the position of under-secretary was not finalised until August 1936, when Lee received a salary of £600 plus £200 house allowance. Lee attended cabinet meetings, however, from the first official meeting of the New Year on 19 Feb. 1936. Cabinet schedules, esp. 19, 26 Feb., 1, 29 Aug. 1936, NP 2028.
16. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 119, and McCombs interview, 6 July 1981
17. Olssen, *John A. Lee*, pp. 77–81. Neither McCombs, interview 6 July 1981, nor Nordmeyer, interview 4 Dec. 1980, was surprised at Lee not being in the cabinet.
18. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 119, and Jennie and Norman Douglas, interview, 4 Feb. 1983
19. Lee to Downie Stewart, 16 Dec. 1935, Stewart MS. 985, 6/143
20. Peter Butler, *NZ Times*, 4 Oct. 1981, and interview, 14 Oct. 1981. The *NZ Herald*'s reporter Hintz also noticed how upset and disgruntled Lee was after the caucus meeting, Hintz to author, 1 June 1981.
21. Ibid.
22. Roy Holland to P. J. O'Farrell, 16 April 1962, O'FP, ANL 6265, B9, F5, and interview with Norman Douglas, 4 Feb. 1983
23. Lee to Mollie, 14 Jan. 1936, cit. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 119
24. CMWP, TMS 998, F1, and Sir Terence McCombs interview, 6 July 1981
25. Sir Arnold Nordmeyer, interview, 4 Dec. 1980
26. 1935 conference report, TMS 270/355; *Truth*, 1 May 1935; *Gisborne Times*, 18 Nov. 1935; *Auckland Star*, 28 Nov. 1935
27. 1935 conference report, TMS 270/355, and caucus minutes, 20, 21 Feb. 1936. Also interviews with Nordmeyer, McCombs and Hunter.
28. Caucus minutes, 25 Nov. 1936, 17 Oct. 1937; cabinet schedules, 7 Sept. 1937, NP 2047; Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, pp. 40–1
29. Nash, NP 287
30. McCombs interview, 6 July 1981, and Keith Berendsen to author, 19 July 1982. See also Fagan, cit. *Evening Post*, 27 March 1940; author's interview with Hunter, 6 Aug. 1980; Keith Sinclair interview with Sir Carl Berendsen, 8 Jan. 1971; Frank Corner to author, 30 June, 29 July 1982.
31. Savage in Parliament, 6 Oct. 1939, Radio NZ Archives, D 694, and Fred Hackett, cit. Mason, Radio NZ Archives interview, n.d., T701-3
32. Sir Harry Gullett, MHR, cit. *Evening Post*, 9 April 1938
33. Cit. *Hawkes Bay Herald Tribune*, 23 Aug. 1937
34. Forbes to Stewart, 27 March 1936, SP 985, 4/83
35. Kelliher interview, 15 July 1981

36. Professor John Roberts, discussion with the author, 25 May 1982
37. Ian MacKay, 'Broadcasting and the Politicians', unpub. typescript, n.d., and interview, 13 Oct. 1981; Berendsen interview, 8 Jan. 1971; and cabinet schedules, 23 June 1937, NP 2047. MacKay was station manager of 2ZB during the late 1930s. A former president of the Nelson Trades and Labour Council, he helped record Savage's Christmas and other addresses and was later to attain an international reputation as a developer of radio broadcasting and author on the history of broadcasting in various parts of the world.
38. MacKay, 'Broadcasting and the Politicians'. MacKay was in Savage's office during this discussion between Savage and Heenan, MacKay interview, 13 Oct. 1981.
39. *Auckland Star*, 28 Nov. 1935
40. *PD*, 1937, v. 248, p. 529; *Dominion*, 30 July 1937
41. Cabinet schedules, 6 Dec. 1935, NP 2028
42. Ibid., 13 Dec. 1935
43. Ibid., 10, 13 Dec. 1935
44. PLP Report to 1936 conference, TMS 270/23
45. Savage to Eileen, 8 March 1936
46. Cabinet schedules, 14, 27 Jan., 4 March 1936. For a partisan but detailed summary of Labour's legislative and administrative actions during 1936, see D. Wilson, *History in the Making*, Wellington, NZLP, 1936, a thirty-one-page pamphlet with a foreword by Savage, and J. Thorn, *New Zealand's Labour Government. Its First Year of Office*, Wellington, 1937. For a more academic summary and analysis, see R. M. Chapman, 'From Labour to National', esp. pp. 388–44, in W. H. Oliver, ed., *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, and Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, pp. 123–32.
47. Cabinet schedules, 1 Feb. 1936
48. Ibid., 25 July 1938
49. Kelliher, *New Zealand at the Cross-roads*, pp. 85, 91, and PM's diary, 18, 21 Feb., 25, 26 March, 17 June, 14 Aug., 3 Sept., 20 Nov., 10 Dec. 1936, 6, 8, 21 Jan., 9, 22 March 1937
50. Caucus minutes, 21 Feb. 1936
51. *PD*, 1932, v. 232, p. 508; caucus minutes, 8 Sept. 1937; *Standard*, 2 Sept. 1937
52. R. M. Campbell to Sinclair, 11 Sept. 1970, TMS 1900, F16
53. The vote in a caucus of fifty-five members was only 14–14. See caucus minutes, 20 July, 30 Aug. 1936, 17 Feb., 17 June, 14 Sept., 23, 24, 30 Nov. 1937; Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 23–4 Nov. 1937, pp. 43–4, and 10, 18 Dec. 1937, pp. 50–1. For a more detailed discussion of the economic policies of the first Labour Government 1935–38, esp. re the guaranteed price, exchange control, the dispute over the nationalisation of the banks, and the negotiating of overseas loans, see Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, esp. pp. 123–89.
54. *PD*, 1936, v. 244, p. 159. See also *PD*, 1938, v. 251, p. 642.
55. Coates to Stewart, 5 Nov., 4 Dec. 1936, SP 985, 2/46, and Coates's press statement announcing that he and six other MPs intended leaving the National Caucus if Adam Hamilton was not elected Leader of the Opposition, CP 1785/120.
56. Coates to Stewart, 5 Nov. 1936
57. Chapman, 'From Labour to National', pp. 346–7 in Oliver, *The Oxford History of New Zealand*
58. Sir George Wilson, who became National's first president, to Coates, 22 May 1936, CP 1785/118. This file also contains the 1936 conference agenda, remits, various drafts of the proposed constitution and rules, and various policy suggestions and documents.
59. File of correspondence and documents on negotiations, CP 1785/125
60. *National News*, Oct. 1937, CP 1785/121
61. *Dominion*, 29 Jan. 1938
62. Ibid.

63. *Standard*, 6 Jan. 1938
64. NZ National Party bulletin No. 7, *The Art of Political Address*, n.d. [1938], TMS 270/16. See also *Auckland Star*, 7 July 1938.
65. *Melbourne Age*, cit. *Standard*, 19 Aug. 1937
66. 1936 NZLP National Executive report annex (14 pp.) lists the branches and affiliations and membership for 1935–36, TMS 270/23. The 1937–38 figures come from the annex (25 pp.) to the 1938 National Executive report, WP 340.
67. Remit 77, 1938 annual conference summary of proceedings, WP 337, and Wilson to all branches and affiliates, 10 June 1936, O'FP, ANL 6265, B1 F5
68. 1936 and 1938 National Executive reports
69. Minutes of meeting, 10 July 1934, Roberts Papers D 157. An earlier joint committee of the Alliance and NZLP Executives had been set up on 1 May 1930 to discuss and agree on matters affecting both organisations, especially of an industrial nature, NZLP Executive minutes, 21 May 1930.
70. H. Barnes, President NZ and Auckland Waterside Workers' Unions, Roberts Papers G 72
71. Roberts to Savage, 9 April 1936, Roberts Papers D260/1
72. Conference minutes 1936, TMS 270/23
73. Savage to Nash, 14 Dec. 1924, O'FP, ANL 6265, B4, F29; Webb cit. *Evening Post*, 27 March 1940; Thorn, *New Zealand's Labour Government*, pp. 53–4
74. Scrimgeour, interview, 15 April 1981. For a detailed discussion of Labour and the Maori, see C. J. Orange, 'A Kind of Equality. Labour and the Maori People 1935–49', unpub. MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1977.
75. Savage to Thorn, 10 Aug. 1932, TMS 1501, F3
76. NZLP Executive minutes, 66 Nov. 1931
77. King, *Te Puea*, pp. 140 and 177
78. NZLP conference report, 17 April 1933, TMS 1501, F10
79. Ratana to Savage, cit. *Wanganui Chronicle*, 12 Sept. 1938
80. Tirikatene cit. J. M. Henderson, *Ratana*, pp. 90–1
81. Orange, 'A Kind of Equality', p. 252
82. Cabinet schedules, 11, 27 March, 13 June, 19 Oct. 1936. Also Orange, 'A Kind of Equality', pp. 119–21.
83. *Standard*, 28 Oct., 18 Nov. 1936: *NZ Herald*, 26 Oct. 1936; Orange, 'A Kind of Equality', pp. 52–3; NZLP Executive minutes, 12 Nov. 1936
84. Ngata to Sir Peter Buck, 15 July 1940, cit. Orange, 'A Kind of Equality', p. 123
85. NZLP Executive minutes, 10 Dec. 1935
86. Ibid., 13 Jan., 6 Aug. 1936
87. Ibid., 13 Nov. 1937; Pei Te Hurinui Jones, cit. King, *Te Puea*, pp. 201, 223. At the 1938 election Jones, backed openly by Te Puea and the National Party, stood unsuccessfully as an independent for Western Maori.
88. King, *Te Puea*, pp. 203–4
89. Deputation to Savage from Orakei tribes, 24 Aug. 1936, NP 1158, cit. R. T. Metge, 'The House that Jack Built', unpub. MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1972, p.31
90. Olssen, *John A. Lee*, pp. 105–6; also *NZ Observer*, 8 July 1937
91. Olssen, *John A. Lee* p. 106
92. PM's diaries 1936–38; Keith Berendsen to author, 19 July 1982; Frank Corner to author, 30 June, 29 July 1982
93. Berendsen interviewed by Sinclair, 8 Jan. 1971, and Keith Berendsen to author, 19 July 1982. See also an assessment of Savage by an unnamed senior public servant who had worked closely with Savage (probably Berendsen), *Listener*, 5 April 1940.
94. Lee to Mollie, 1 April 1936, cit. Olssen, *John A. Lee*, p. 84
95. Olssen, *John A Lee*, pp. 89–91

96. E.g. PM's diaries, Nov. 1936, Jan, Feb, March 1937
97. Ibid., 30, 31 July 1937. Savage had returned on 28 July.
98. Savage cit. *Elector-Vote Labour* (pamphlet), 20 Nov. 1935
99. Scrimgeour to David Wilson, 7 Dec. 1941, NP 2269. Also interviews with Scrimgeour, 24 Sept. 1968, 15 April 1981.
100. Scrimgeour to Savage, 6 April 1936, NP 2281
101. Savage to Scrimgeour, 7 April, 1936, NP 2281
102. N. Du Maurier, Goldberg Advertising Ltd, to Savage, 9 Nov. 1936, and detailed report by B. T. Shiel, formerly advertising manager, Vacuum Oil Co., 4 Nov. 1936, NP 2281
103. Scrimgeour to Wilson, 7 Dec. 1941
104. PM's diaries, June 1936; cabinet schedules, 15, 30 June 1936; PM's diary, 29 Oct. 1936
105. MacKay interview, 13 Oct. 1981
106. Savage cit. *Standard*, 29 Dec. 1938. For similar views, see Savage, *NZ Radio Advertising*, June 1938.
107. Savage at the opening of station 2YA in 1937, Radio NZ Archives, D 755
108. *Standard*, 29 Dec. 1938, 19 Jan. 1939
109. Cornish to Savage, a three-page memo, 10 Sept. 1936, NP 2281
110. Caucus minutes, 25 Nov. 1936; Savage to Public Service Commission, 5 Oct. 1936, and commission to Savage, 7 Oct. 1936, NP 2281
111. Scrimgeour to Wilson,7 Dec. 1941, NP 2269
112. Cit. MacKay, 'Broadcasting and the Politicians'
113. Scrimgeour to Savage, 6 April 1936, and Savage to Scrimgeour, 7 April 1936, NP 2281
114. MacKay interview, 13 Oct. 1981; cabinet schedules, 23, 28 April 1937, NP 2038
115. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 5 Nov. 1937, p. 41
116. Notes of interview, forty-three foolscap pages, 6 May 1938, NP 2281
117. Scrimgeour to Savage, 11 Nov. 1937, NP 2281
118. E.g., Savage to H. M. Crispe, 4 Nov. 1937, and M. Mills, 5 Nov. 1937, NP 2281
119. Scrimgeour to Savage, 26 July 1939, NP 2281
120. Cabinet schedules, 18 Feb., 16 May 1936, NP 2028
121. Morgan Williams in his papers, TMS 998
122. E.g., Forbes, *PD*, 1938, v. 252, p. 442
123. Savage in his foreword to C. E. Wheeler, *Listeners' Guide to Parliament on the Air*, Wellington, 1936
124. MacKay, 'Broacasting and the Politicians'. See also Berendsen interview, 8 Jan. 1971, for confirmation of Savage's decisiveness in decision-making.
125. Savage, cit. Christchurch *Press*, 6 Sept. 1937
126. *PD*, 1936, v. 244, p. 65
127. Metge, 'The House that Jack Built'. See also Olssen, *John A. Lee*, esp. pp. 92–113 and Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, esp. pp. 155–8.
128. Tyndall, Sir Arthur (Bay). b. 1891. d. 1979. Engineer and solicitor and also studied accountancy. Under-secretary of mines 1934–40. Director housing construction 1936–40. Judge of the Arbitration Court 1940–65. Tyndall was asked by Nash to become director of housing. Had considerable qualms about working with Lee, whom he regarded as 'pugnacious', but the two men worked well together. Tyndall's autobiography is in TMS 2002 F2.
129. Cit. Metge, 'The House that Jack Built' p. 18
130. E.g., 11 March 1936, 9 Jan., June–July 1937, cit. Metge 'The House that Jack Built', pp. 18, 24, and PM's diary, 17 July 1936. See also cabinet schedules, 14 March 1939, NP 2044, when cabinet approved negotiations to acquire Fletcher's housing division at valuation.
131. Robinson, *James Fletcher: Builder*, pp. 118–9

132. Savage to union deputation, 10 Nov. 1936, NP 1158, cit. Metge, 'The House that Jack Built', pp. 39–40. See also Metge, pp. 37–8, 49–51
133. Ibid., pp. 50–1
134. Cabinet schedules, 28 July 1936, NP 2028; 26 Sept., 4, 19 Nov. 1936, NP 2024; 11 Jan. 1937, NP 2038
135. Savage to Jordan, 18 Dec. 1936, NA PM 16/1
136. Lee to Jordan, 17 Dec. 1936, NA PM 16/1
137. *PD*, 1936, v. 246, p. 348; 1937, v. 248, p. 34
138. Tyndall autobiography, p. 155, TMS 2002 F2
139. Forbes to Stewart, 21 Sept. 1936, SP 985, 4/83
140. Metge, 'The House that Jack Built' pp. 42–3
141. PM's diary, 23 Dec. 1937; *Dominion*, 27 Dec. 1937; Skinner, *Man to Man*, pp. 40–3. Skinner was later to become Labour MP for Tamaki and subsequently president of the Federation of Labour.
142. *Standard*, 7 July 1938
143. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 3 July 1938, p. 79
144. Ibid., 27 Jan. 1937, p. 13
145. Ibid., 23 March 1937, pp. 15–16
146. Ibid., 25 March 1937, p. 17
147. Ibid., 29 March 1937, p. 18
148. Ibid., 29 July 1937, p. 27
149. Ibid., 6 Aug. 1937, p. 28
150. Ibid., 1 July 1937, p. 24
151. Ibid., 24, 27 Sept. 1937, pp. 34–5; *PD*, 1937, v. 248, pp. 321–3
152. Ibid., 20 Oct. 1937, p. 38
153. Ibid., 13 Oct. 1937, p. 37, and CMWP, TMS 998, F1
154. Ibid., 25 Aug. 1936, p. 10
155. Scrimgeour recollections, Radio NZ Archives, T 724, and Lee, *Political Notebooks*, p. 53
156. E.g., Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 13 Jan., 24 Sept. 1937, p. 34, and 12, 14, 21 Feb. 1938, pp. 54–5
157. Ibid., 5 April 1938, p. 60, and Hintz to author, 1 June 1981. Nordmeyer said that Nash 'loved to procrastinate', TVNZ, 'Nordy Looks Back', Part III, 22 Dec. 1980
158. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 27 June 1938, p. 77
159. Lee interview, 19 Feb. 1980
160. Ibid.
161. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 9 Sept. 1936, p. 11
162. Ibid., 20 March 1937, p. 15
163. David Wilson interview with Keith Sinclair, 11 Jan. 1971
164. Lee, *The John A Lee Diaries*, 25 Nov. 1937, p. 44

XI NATIONAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL SECURITY, 1937–38

1. Savage to Eileen, 23 July 1934
2. *PD*, 1936, v. 246, pp. 540–2
3. *Evening Post*, 30 April 1935, cit. Wood, *The New Zealand People At War*, p. 34
4. *Dominion*, 27 Feb. 1936
5. *PD*, 1935, v. 243, p. 501
6. Caucus minutes, 27 July 1936. See also McGibbon, *Blue-Water Rationale*, pp. 261–7
7. Cabinet schedules, 29 Aug., 8 Dec. 1936, 12 July 1937
8. McIntyre, *The Rise and Fall of the Singapore Naval Base 1919–1942*, pp. 141–3

9. McGibbon, *Blue-Water Rationale*, pp. 302–4
10. *Dunedin Evening Star*, 30 Sept. 1938
11. McGibbon, *Blue-Water Rationale*, p. 258
12. Jordan to Savage, 10 Nov. 1936, 23, 27 Sept., 6 Oct. 1937
13. PM's diary, 18 Feb.–17 March 1937
14. Savage to Eileen, 4 April 1937
15. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 145; John S. Reid to author, 4 Aug. 1981
16. Governor General to Secretary of State, 2, 5 Dec. 1936, and Secretary of State to Governor General, 3, 10 Dec. 1936, cit. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, pp. 139–40
17. Miss Gwen Williams, a nurse who was a passenger on the *Arawa*. The diary is in the custody of Mr John Webster, curator of Ewelme Cottage, Auckland, who brought it to the author's attention.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. PM's diary, 10–14 May 1937
22. Savage to Eileen, 26 May 1937
23. *Dominion*, 1 Oct. 1937
24. MacKay, 'Broadcasting and the Politicians', and MacKay interview, 13 Oct. 1981, where MacKay claimed Savage told him of this incident during Christmas dinner 1939.
25. MacKay, 'Broadcasting and the Politicians', and Jordan cit. BBC radio broadcast transcript, Australian Broadcasting Service, 24 March 1944, EMB Papers
26. *Standard*, 5 Aug. 1937, and Hintz to author, 1 June 1981
27. John S. Reid to author, 4 Aug. 1981; Brown, 'Tribute to Michael Joseph Savage', p. 6/90
28. *Daily Express*, 14 May 1937
29. *Dominion*, 6 May 1937
30. Wood, *The New Zealand People at War*, p. 54
31. *Napier Telegraph*, 12 Aug. 1937
32. *Dunedin Star*, 14 Aug. 1937
33. Ibid.
34. *Evening Post*, 29 July 1937
35. *Dannevirke News*, 26 June 1937; *Wanganui Herald*, 28 June 1937; *Evening Post*, 25 June 1937, 28 March 1940
36. *Dominion*, 1 June 1939
37. James Hargest, MP, *PD*, 1937, v. 248, p. 480; *Evening Post*, 29 July 1937; *Nelson Mail*, 7 Aug. 1937
38. *Standard*, 9 Sept. 1937
39. See McIntyre, *The Rise and Fall of the Singapore Naval Base, 1919–1942*, pp. 130–9; Hamill, *The Strategic Illusion*, pp. 278–82; and McGibbon, *Blue-Water Rationale*, pp. 282–96 and 391–2
40. McGibbon, *Blue-Water Rationale*, pp. 299–300
41. Cit. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 148
42. Savage told this story to Ian MacKay over Christmas dinner 1939 and MacKay recorded it immediately. See MacKay, 'Broadcasting and the Politicians'.
43. Hugh Dalton's diaries, 18, 22 June 1937, cit. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, pp. 147–8
44. Ibid.
45. Jordan to Savage, 18, 20 Aug. 1937
46. Jordan to Savage, 23 Sept. 1937
47. Ibid.; Jordan to Savage 2 Oct.; *Napier Telegraph*, 12 Aug. 1937
48. Jordan to Savage, 23 Sept. 1937
49. Note in Savage's handwriting, cabinet schedules, 9 May 1938, NP 2026
50. Jordan to Savage, 23 Sept. 1937; also Rabbi A. Astor, cit. *Auckland Star*, 30

March 1940
51. Jordan to Savage, 27 Sept., 2 Oct. 1937
52. Jordan to Savage, 2 Oct. 1937
53. Jordan to Savage, 16 March 1938
54. Ibid.
55. *Taranaki Herald*, 8, 16 April 1938; *NZ Herald*, 8 April 1938; *Dominion*, 18 April 1938
56. Angus Ross, 'New Zealand and the Commonwealth to 1939', in NZ Institute of International Affairs, *The Commonwealth: Its Past, Present and Future*, NZIIA, Wellington, 1973, p. 18
57. *PD*, 1938, v. 251, p. 125
58. *Southland Times*, 5 Oct. 1938
59. *PD*, 1938, v. 251, p. 33
60. Ibid., p. 643
61. *Ashburton Guardian*, 3 Aug. 1938
62. Bishop Liston, cit. *Evening Post*, 28 March 1940, and *Auckland Star*, 30 March 1940; Nordmeyer interview, 4 Dec. 1980
63. Bishop H. St Barbe Holland, *Evening Post*, 1 April 1940, and letter to Nash with typescript of address, 5 April 1940, NP 2269
64. Rabbi A. Astor, cit. *Auckland Star*, 30 March 1940
65. Typescript of notes made from Savage's address at Auckland Town Hall, 11 Oct. 1938, CP 1785/141
66. E.g., Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, pp. 50, 62
67. *Dominion*, 27 May 1938
68. *Levin Chronicle*, 14 June 1938
69. *Dominion*, 20 July 1937
70. PM's diary, 7–27 July, 12–15 Oct. 1937
71. Jordan to Savage, 10 Nov. 1936, 7 March 1938
72. *Truth*, 2 March 1938
73. *Evening Post*, 13 Dec. 1937
74. *Truth*, 13 April 1938
75. *Evening Post*, 4 Jan. 1938
76. *Dominion*, 23 Dec. 1937
77. Savage to Jordan, 13 April 1938
78. Savage to Doris, 22 Feb. 1938
79. PM's diary, 26 Feb. 1938; *Dominion*, 28 Feb. 1938; *Standard*, 3 March 1938
80. *Times* (Palmerston North), 17 March 1938
81. Caucus minutes, 15 March 1938
82. E.g., *Truth*, 2 March, 13 April 1938
83. *Truth*, 2 March 1938
84. *Standard*, 23 June 1938
85. *Dannevirke Evening News*, 18 June 1938
86. *Ashburton Guardian*, 3 Aug. 1938
87. *Standard*, 9, 16 June 1938
88. Ibid., 23 June 1938
89. Ibid.
90. North Canterbury LRC minutes, 28 July 1938
91. *Christchurch Star*, 3 Aug. 1938
92. Ibid., *Ashburton Guardian*, 3 Aug. 1938
93. *Standard*, 23 June 1938
94. *Christchurch Star Sun*, 4 Aug. 1938
95. *Wellington Evening Post*, 16 June 1938
96. *Ashburton Guardian*, 3 Aug. 1938
97. *Christchurch Star Sun*, 4 Aug. 1938

98. *Standard*, 7 July 1938
99. PM's diary, 19–30 Aug. 1938; *Dominion*, 22, 25, 27 Aug. 1938; Webb, cit. *Westport News*, 28 March 1940, *Evening Post*, 27 March 1940, *PD*, 1940, v. 257, p. 103, *Standard*, 10 Aug. 1939; O'Regan diaries, 2 Aug. 1939; Bishop H. St Barbe Holland, cit. *Evening Post*, 1 April 1940, NP 2269; Adam Hamilton, *PD*, 1940, v. 257, p. 103.
100. Savage to Eileen, 29 Sept. 1936
101. Bishop Holland, *Evening Post*, 1 April 1940
102. E.g., PM's diary, 13 Oct. 1938, two days before the election, when Savage had appointments with Dr Gunson, Dr Hardie Neil and Dr Hastings
103. Alf French to Rowland Savage, 24 April 1940; *Standard*, 8 Dec. 1938, 10 Aug. 1939; *Dominion*, 28 March 1940.
104. Cit. *Westport News*, 28 March 1940
105. *Wanganui Chronicle*, 12 Sept. 1938
106. Lee, *John A. Lee Diaries*, 23, 28 Aug. 1938, pp. 88–9
107. Ibid., 10 Sept. 1938, p. 91
108. Bernice Shackleton, *Christchurch Star Sun*, 17 Sept. 1928
109. *Standard*, 14 July 1938
110. Savage at a meeting in Ponsonby, *Standard*, 13 Oct. 1938, and at Foxton, *Standard*, 16 June 1938
111. *Ashburton Guardian*, 3 Aug. 1938; F. Doidge, MP, and A. S. Richards, MP, cit. *Dominion*, 18 Aug. 1939
112. *Standard*, 11 Aug. 1938
113. *Dominion* editorial, 24 Sept. 1938
114. W. H. Hall, National candidate, *Timaru Herald*, __ Oct. 1938
115. CMWP, TMS 998, F1
116. *Truth*, 22 Dec. 1937
117. O.S. Hintz to Mrs E. M. Brown, 19 Feb. 1959. For a detailed discussion of the origins of the social security system, see Elizabeth Hanson, *The Politics of Social Security*, Auckland, 1980
118. Caucus minutes, 10, 11 Feb. 1938
119. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 12, 14 Feb. 1938, pp. 53–4
120. Hanson, *The Politics of Social Security*, pp. 74–7
121. See J. B. Lovell-Smith, *The New Zealand Doctor and the Welfare State*.
122. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, pp. 60–3, and TVNZ, 'Nordy Looks Back', Part I, 8 Dec. 1980, and Part II, 15 Dec. 1980. Sir Terence McCombs, who was not a member of the Lee-McMillan-Nordmeyer faction, believed that McMillan and Nordmeyer were much more influential in creating the Social Security Act than Lee and that Savage was prepared to listen to them, Sir Terence McCombs interview, 6 July 1981.
123. Caucus minutes, 4 March 1938
124. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 26 May 1938, pp. 69–70
125. Nordmeyer, interview 4 Dec. 1980. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 165, says John Stanhope Reid, one of Nash's assistants, claimed he made the suggestion but Nordmeyer said Reid was simply present at the time and agreed to Nordmeyer's proposal.
126. *PD*, 1938, v. 252, p. 419
127. Holland, *PD*, 1938, v. 252, p. 556
128. W.P. Endean, *Rotorua Post*, 24 May 1938
129. *Auckland Star*, 22 March 1939
130. *PD*, 1938, v. 252, p. 421
131. National Health Insurance Committee Memorandum, 28 April 1938, cit. Lovell-Smith, *The New Zealand Doctor and the Welfare State*, p. 78
132. Ibid., pp. 84–6

133. Savage's report to 1939 NZLP conference, TMS 270/25
134. *PD*, 1938, v. 252, p. 423
135. *PD*, 1938, v. 252, p. 416
136. *PD*, 1937, v. 248, p. 528
137. Hintz to Mrs Brown, 17 July 1959. See also Nash to Bruce Brown, draft letter, n.d. [1962], cit. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 167; and Hanson, *The Politics of Social Security*, pp. 143–41.
138. *PD*, 1938, v. 251, p. 649
139. Election report to the NZLP's 1939 annual conference, TMS 270/25; caucus minutes, 10 Dec. 1937; *Elector* (Auckland), 8 Oct. 1938, CP 1785/141; *Evening Post*, 24 Sept. 1938
140. *Christchurch Star Sun*, 19 Sept. 1938; *NZ Herald*, 24 Sept. 1938
141. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 26 Oct. 1938, pp. 97–8
142. *NZ Observer*, 13 Oct. 1938
143. Ibid.
144. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 9 March 1938, p. 57
145. Ibid., 26 March 1938, pp. 59–60
146. *Hawkes Bay Herald Tribune*, 30 April 1938
147. *Christchurch Star Sun*, 28 Sept. 1938; *Southland Times*, 5 Oct. 1938
148. The speech notes are found in TMS 270/10.
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid.
151. *Dominion*, 23 Sept. 1938
152. Ibid.
153. Hunter interview, 6 Aug. 1980
154. *Christchurch Star Sun*, 28 Sept. 1938; *Dominion*, 15 Oct. 1938
155. *Dunedin Evening Star*, 30 Sept. 1938; *Standard*, 13 Oct. 1938; *NZ Herald* 14 Oct. 1938; *Dominion*, 15 Oct. 1938
156. Hunter interview, 6 Aug. 1980
157. *Auckland Star*, 12 Oct. 1938; *Workers Weekly*, 21 Oct. 1938
158. *Dominion*, 15 Oct. 1938; *Standard*, 20 Oct. 1938; campaign report in Wellington LRC minutes, 9 Nov. 1938; TMS 270/32
159. O.N. Gillespie to Nash, 20 Dec. 1938, NP 2269
160. *Dominion*, 15 Oct. 1938
161. Chapman in Oliver, *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, p. 345. See also election report to 1938 NZLP conference, TMS 270/25. Labour won 528 296 votes to National's 381 089.
162. *Standard*, 20 Oct. 1938
163. Hintz to Mrs Brown, 17 July 1959
164. *Wanganui Herald*, 8 Dec. 1938

XII THE 'YEARS OF HELL', 1938–39

1. Savage to Doris, 12 Dec. 1938, and Alf French to Rowland Savage, 24 Aug. 1940
2. Savage speaking to newspaper workers, cit. *Christchurch Star Sun*, 2 June 1939
3. Hintz to author, 1 June 1981, and Hintz to Eileen Brown, 17 July 1959
4. Ibid.
5. NZLP Executive minutes, 21 Nov. 1938, 14 Jan. 1939, and Savage to all supporters of the Labour movement, n.d. [1939], CMWP TMS 337
6. 1939 annual conference report, TMS 270/25
7. PM's diary, 7 March 1939; *Standard*, 9 March 1939
8. PM's diary, 21–26 March 1939; *Evening Post*, 27 March 1939
9. *Standard*, 16 Dec. 1937

10. Ibid., 19 Aug. 1937
11. Caucus minutes, 26 May, 3 June 1936
12. Lee et al. to Savage, cit. Olssen, *John A Lee*, p. 133
13. Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, p. 122
14. Olssen, *John A. Lee*, p. 133
15. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 24 Sept. 1937, p. 34
16. Ibid., 28 Oct. 1938, pp. 98–9; PM's diary, 28 Oct. 1938
17. PM's diary, appointments with Barrell 4 Nov. (twice), 7 Dec. 1938, 17, 20 Jan., 13 Feb., 2 March, 9 June, 15 July, 9 Oct. 1939; and with Hodgens 17, 23 Nov., 2, 15 Dec. 1938, 5, 13, 25, 26 Jan., 14, 15 Feb., 20 April, 5, 18 May, 29 Aug., 22 Sept., 19 Oct., 8 Nov. 1939
18. Caucus minutes, 3–4 Nov. 1938
19. Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, p. 126
20. Ben Roberts to Nash, 6 Nov. 1938, NP 2537, cit. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 173
21. Lyon to Nash, 25 Nov. 1940, NP 2139
22. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 4 Nov. 1938, pp. 101–2
23. Ibid.
24. Goodrich, 'The Labor Movement in New Countries', pp. 8–21
25. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 6 Feb. 1939, pp. 124–5
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., 10 Feb. 1939, p. 126
28. NZLP Executive minutes and caucus minutes, 10 Feb. 1939
29. For report of the committee, 11 Feb. 1939, see TMS 1709.
30. NZLP Executive minutes, 27 Feb. 1939
31. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 18 Dec. 1938, p. 115
32. Ibid., 12 Dec. 1938, p. 113
33. Ibid., 15 Jan. 1938, p. 118
34. McMillan to Lee, 22 Dec. 1938, Nordmeyer to Lee, 12 Dec. 1938, and O'Brien to Lee, 13 Dec. 1938, cit. Olssen, *John A. Lee*, p. 135
35. *Dominion*, 14 July 1939
36. Lee to Burton, 20 March [1928], Burton Papers TMS 438/35a
37. Interviews with Mrs Ethel McMillan, 9 July 1981, and Nordmeyer, 4 Dec. 1980
38. Williams, CMWP, TMS 998/1
39. Williams to Lee, 26 Sept. 1943, cit. Olssen, *John A. Lee*, p. 189. Among the DLP leaders alienated from and by Lee were Barnard, P. Adds, E. B. Newton, Frank Temm, B. Beckerleg, A. H. Carman, E. L. Hill and finally Norman Douglas. See Olssen, *John A. Lee*, pp. 166–8, 183, and interview with Douglas, 4 and 9 Feb. 1983
40. For a copy of the letter see TMS 270/41 or the Connelly Collection, University of Canterbury Library, Box 69. For a detailed discussion, see Olssen, *John A. Lee*, pp. 135–8.
41. Ibid.
42. E.g. S. G. Holland, *PD*, 1939, v. 254, pp. 695–6; *Dominion*, 29 July 1939
43. Lee to Downie Stewart, n.d. [envelope postmarked 13 Nov. 1944], Stewart MS. 985, 6/143
44. Lee to Ormond Burton, 20 March [1928], Burton Papers TMS 438, 35a
45. NZLP Executive minutes, 4, 8 April 1939
46. *Southland Times*, 19 April 1939
47. 1939 annual conference report, TMS 270/25. Note esp pp. 6, 11 ff., 39. The Labour Party's 203 501 members in 620 branches and 788 affiliated unions were represented at the conference by 580 voting delegates and 516 accredited visitors.
48. Ibid., p. 14
49. Ibid.; David Wilson, 'Confidential Summarised Report of Proceedings', TMS 270/32; Olssen, *John A. Lee*, p. 138

50. Christchurch *Press*, 13 April 1939
51. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 12 Jan. 1939, p. 117
52. Ibid., __ April 1939, p. 143
53. Christchurch *Press*, 12 April 1939; 1939 annual conference report, p. 14
54. PM's diary, 11 April 1939; 1939 annual conference report, pp. 20–21. Savage also met Nash, Webb, Fagan, Sullivan and Berendsen that morning. For another account and perspective, see Olssen, *John A. Lee*, pp. 138–9.
55. NZLP Executive minutes, 4, 8 April 1939
56. Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, pp. 147–8
57. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, __ April 1939, p. 144
58. Ormond Burton, unpub. autobiography, typescript, TMS 438/59
59. E.g. *Otago Daily Times*, 19 April 1939
60. Burton, unpub. autobiography. For a version more sympathetic to Savage, see *Standard*, 20 April 1939. Other descriptions of the debate are found in *Otago Daily Times*, 19 April, *Auckland Star*, 12 April, *Dominion*, 21 April, and *Southland Times*, 19 April 1939.
61. Wilson, 'Confidential Summarised Report of Proceedings'
62. *Standard*, 27 April 1939
63. 1939 annual conference report, p. 23
64. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, __ April, 20 April 1939, pp. 146–7
65. Lee to Scrimgeour, 17 April 1939, cit. Olssen, *John A. Lee*, p. 139
66. Lee to Williams, 2 May 1939, cit. Olssen, *John A. Lee*, p. 140
67. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 1 June 1939, pp. 156–7
68. Lovell-Smith, *The New Zealand Doctor and the Welfare State*, pp. 94–108
69. Ibid., pp. 42, 96–7
70. For the twenty-four pages of almost verbatim minutes of the meeting, 29 May 1939, see NZLP MS. in TMS 270/1.
71. Lovell-Smith, *The New Zealand Doctor and the Welfare State*, p. 100
72. Minutes of meeting, 29 May 1939, p. 13
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid., p. 24; Lovell-Smith, *The New Zealand Doctor and the Welfare State*, p. 101
75. See Hanson, *The Politics of Social Security*, pp. 119–26, for the implementation and subsequent history of the general practitioner scheme. Also TVNZ, 'Nordy Looks Back', 8, 15, 22 Dec. 1980 (broadcasts).
76. For a fuller discussion of the 1938–39 exchange crisis, see Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, pp. 170–89.
77. W. Nash, *Nash Replies to the Critics*, NZLP, Wellington, n.d. [1940], CP, TMS 1785/123
78. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 172
79. Savage to Eileen Brown, 12 Dec. 1938
80. Williams, TMS 998/1. See also caucus minutes, 3–4 Nov. 1938, and cabinet schedules, 20 Dec. 1938, NP 2043.
81. *Standard*, 15 Dec. 1938
82. *Auckland Star*, 24 March; *Standard*, 9 March 1939
83. *Evening Post*, 20 April, 31 May 1939
84. Jordan to Savage, 14 Dec. 1938
85. *Dominion*, 12 Aug., *Otago Daily Times*, 10 Aug., *NZ Herald*, 11 Aug. 1939; *PD*, 1939, v. 255, pp. 130–9
86. Jordan to Savage, 19 Jan. 1939
87. Ibid., 20 April 1939
88. *Christchurch Star Sun*, 2 June 1939
89. Savage to Nash, 29 May 1939, NP 349
90. Nash to Savage, 2 June 1939, cit. Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 178
91. Nash to Savage, 1 July 1939, NP 349

92. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 16 June 1939, p. 159
93. PM's diary, 26 June–2 July 1939; *Dominion*, 28, 30 June, 4 July 1939
94. Savage to Nash, 3 July 1939, NP 349
95. PM's diary, 3–26 July 1939
96. E.g. Nash to Savage, 2, 7, 9, 16, 19, 19, 24 June; 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 11, 12, 14, 18, 18, 19, 19, 20, 22, 26, 26, 27, 27, 27, 27, 28, 29, 29, 29 July; 2 Aug. 1939; NP 349
97. Nash to Savage, 5 July 1939
98. Savage to Nash, 6 July 1939
99. Nash to Savage, 19, 24 June 1939; Savage to Nash, 26 June, 10 July 1939
100. Savage to Nash, 27 July 1939
101. *PD*, 1939, v. 254, pp. 881–9; *Southland Times*, 5 Aug., 1939; *Standard*, 10 Aug. 1939; Fraser, *PD*, 1940, v. 257, p. 101
102. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 2, 3 Aug. 1939, pp. 169–70
103. PM's diary, 2–4 Aug. 1939
104. *Standard*, 10 Aug. 1939
105. Cit. *Dominon*, 18 Aug. 1939, and *Evening Post*, 27 March 1940
106. Savage to Nash, 15 Aug. 1939, NP 349
107. Fraser to Nash, 4, 6, 7 Aug. 1939
108. Cit. Williams, TMS 998/1

XIII 'DOWN TO THE GRAVE', 1939–40

1. Jordan to Savage, 31 Oct. and __ Oct. 1938
2. Ross, *John Curtin*, p. 174.
3. Jordan to Savage, 1 Oct. 1938
4. Cit. Wood, *The New Zealand People at War*, p. 93
5. Savage to Jordan, 25 May 1939; McGibbon, *Blue-Water Rationale*, p. 341
6. Jordan to Savage, 24 March 1939
7. Ibid., 27 April 1939
8. E.g. cable of 12 May 1939, cit. Wood, *The New Zealand People at War*, p. 97, and McGibbon, *Blue-Water Rationale*, p. 342
9. Cit. *NZ Herald*, 23 March 1939
10. D. W. McClurg to G. Mills, chairman Auckland Division NZ National Party, 30 Jan. 1939, CP 1785/119
11. Cit. McIntyre, *The Rise and Fall of the Singapore Naval Base*, p. 152
12. Cit. *Dominion*, 24 Jan. 1939
13. *Standard*, 9 Feb. 1939
14. Ibid., 19 Jan, 1939
15. Ibid.
16. *Dominion*, 1, 21 June 1939
17. *PD*, 1939, v. 256, p. 20
18. Broadcast, 5 Sept. 1940, Radio NZ Sound Archives, D 409. Cornish helped Savage write this speech. The best-known passage quoted here repeats phrases and sentiments used in some of Savage's speeches on foreign policy in earlier years.
19. Wood, *The New Zealand People at War*, pp. 108, 111
20. Robert Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia, to Savage, 21 Nov. 1939, cit. McGibbon, *Blue-Water Rationale*, p. 346
21. *NZ Herald*, 26 April 1939; *Evening Post*, 4 May 1939
22. *PD*, 1936, v. 246, p. 542
23. Christchurch *Press*, 23 June 1938; *Dominion*, 3 June 1938; recruiting speech broadcast, 28 Jan. 1940, Radio NZ Archives, D 3631–9
24. At the caucus meeting, 4 Nov. 1939, according to Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, p. 156
25. *Evening Post*, 23 May 1939; Christchurch *Press*, 31 May 1939; recruiting broadcast,

28 Jan. 1940, CP TMS 1785/126; Radio NZ Archives, D3631–9

26. Broadcast 1 March 1940, Radio NZ Archives, D 3631–9. Sir Alistair McIntosh in interview with Dr Michael King, to whom the author is indebted for this recollection, referred to Savage's reluctance. Possibly the speech of 18 Feb. 1940, reproduced in *Dominion* 28 March 1940, the words of which are clearly not, in parts, those of Savage, or his broadcast of 1 March 1940, was the speech referred to.
27. There are two folders containing letters to Savage concerning conscription, TMS 270/4 and 5. See also letters to Ormond Burton from ten Labour parliamentarians, Burton Papers, TMS 438/46.
28. Burton Papers, TMS 438/33
29. Rev. J. John to Fraser, 14 May 1940, TMS 270/5
30. W. H. Barry, secretary, Napier branch, to Savage, 23 Nov. 1939, and J. G. Phelan, secretary, Pahiatua LRC, to Savage, 30 Oct. 1939, TMS 270/4
31. Savage to McMillan, 24 Nov. 1939, TMS 270/4. See also *PD*, 1939, v. 254, p. 36
32. Statement by NZLP and F of L executives, 21 Feb. 1940, WP, TMS 344
33. Minutes of emergency conference NZLP, 3 June 1940, WP, TMS 347
34. Robert Solway, *A Memory of the Late Prime Minister*, Wellington, 1943, written for the opening of Savage's memorial at Bastion Point, 28 March 1943
35. Aruba and Don Alfrey, interview, 26 Aug. 1980. Savage was to make a similar comment to another visitor about that time, Mrs Molly Langstone, interview, 13 Sept. 1983.
36. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 4 Sept. 1938, p. 178
37. Ibid., 8 Sept. 1938, p. 181
38. PM's diary, 6 Oct. 1939; *PD*, 1939, v. 256, pp. 751–2; *Evening Post*, 7 Oct. 1939; broadcast, 6 Oct. 1939, Radio NZ Archives, D 694
39. Ibid., 11 Oct.–26 Nov. 1939
40. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 7 Nov. 1938, pp. 188–9; Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, p. 193; Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, p. 159; Sir Terence McCombs interview, 6 July 1981
41. Williams Papers, TMS 998/1
42. Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, p. 159
43. Ibid., p. 160, and Professor C. Tasman-Jones, Department of Medicine, University of Auckland to author, 12 Oct. 1984. See also Hugh L'Etang, 'The Savage Affair', *History of Medicine* 3:4, winter 1971, pp. 12–13.
44. Sir Terence McCombs, who was secretary of caucus, interview 6 July 1981
45. E.g. D. W. McClurg, secretary, NZNP, to George Mills, chairman, Auckland Division NZNP, 30 Jan. 1939, CP, TMS 1785/119; *Waikato Times*, 15 Nov. 1938
46. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 17 Aug. 1939, p. 173
47. Ibid., 18 Aug. 1939, p. 173; Nordmeyer interview, 4 Dec. 1980
48. John Malton Murray to Nash, 29 March 1939, NP 2139
49. *Waikato Times*, 15 Nov. 1938
50. Address to 1938 Labour Party conference
51. Cit. *Standard*, 10 Nov. 1938
52. Broadcasts, 26 Nov. 1939–1 March 1940. This quote comes from the broadcast on 11 Feb. 1940. Radio NZ Archives, D 3631–9 and D 2139
53. Elizabeth French to Rowland Savage, 9 April 1940, and Savage to Doris, 12 Dec. 1938
54. MacKay, 'Broadcasting and the Politicians', and interview, 13 Oct. 1981
55. *Tomorrow*, 6 Dec. 1939. See also typescript in Connelly Collection, University of Canterbury Library, Box 69.
56. Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, pp. 162–71, backgrounds the writing of the article and reproduces it. See also Olssen, *John A. Lee*, pp. 146–58, and *NZ Herald*, 11 Dec. 1939.

57. Murray to Nash, 3 Oct. 1940, NP 2139
58. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 14 Dec. 1939, p. 192
59. Lyon to Moncur, one of Savage's backbench supporters, 2 Jan. 1941, NP 2304
60. Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, p. 172, and *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 19 Dec. 1939, p. 193. As parliamentary under-secretary, Lee received an honorarium of £600 and a house. See *Hastings Herald Tribune*, 16 Jan. 1940, *Dominion*, 22 Dec. 1939, and *Standard*, 28 Dec. 1939.
61. NZLP Executive minutes, 9 Dec. 1939
62. Mrs Molly Langstone (née Nolan), interview 13 Sept. 1983. For the meeting, see minutes Auckland LRC, 11 Jan. 1940; Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 18 Jan. 1940, pp. 197–8; Olssen, *John A. Lee*, pp. 172–3; interviews with John Banks, 3 March 1983, and Norman Douglas, 4, 9 Feb. 1983, who were both present at the meeting as pro-Lee delegates.
63. Interviews with Banks and Douglas
64. Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, p. 174. See also NZ Executive minutes, 13–14 Jan. 1940; *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 18 Jan. 1940, pp. 197–9; Sir Terence McCombs interview, 6 July 1981; Professor John Roberts discussion, 26 May 1982.
65. Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, p. 175
66. Cit. *Evening Post*, 16 Jan. 1940
67. Lee to Tyndall, 17 March 1940, TMS 2002/279
68. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 18 Jan. 1940, p. 198
69. Ibid., 25 Aug., 3 Nov. 1939, and *Hastings Herald Tribune*, 20 Jan. 1940.
70. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 18 Jan. 1940, p. 199
71. Interview with Norman Douglas, 4, 9 Feb. 1983
72. *Otago Daily Times*, 10 Feb. 1940; Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 18 Jan. 1940, p. 199
73. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 18 March 1940, pp. 205–6, and 24 Feb. 1940, p. 202
74. Interview with Norman and Jenny Douglas, 4 Feb. 1983
75. Elizabeth French to Rowland Savage, 9 April 1940. See also Mervyn Lusty interview, 8 April 1981. Lusty and his brother Cecil, who worked for the Press Association in Wellington, visited Savage in early February 1940.
76. Alf French to Rowland Savage, 24 April 1940
77. McMillan to Lee, n.d. [13, 14 Feb. 1940] and 26 Feb. 1940, cit. Olssen, *John A. Lee*, p. 158. Douglas interviews, 4, 9 Feb 1983. For a discussion of the conference from Lee's viewpoint, see Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, pp. 178–96, and Olssen, *John A. Lee*, pp. 154–60.
78. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 23 March 1940, p. 206
79. Ibid., where Lee lists the MPs whom he believed supported him.
80. Mrs Molly Langstone interview, 13 Sept. 1983
81. Savage to James Purtell, 8 Jan. 1940, TMS 1709
82. Ibid.
83. Sir Alistair McIntosh, a two-page signed typescript on the origins and validity of the Prime Minister's report to conference 1940, 1 April 1940. I am indebted to Dr Michael King for bringing this document to my attention and providing me with a copy of it. See also PM's diary 20 and 26 Feb. 1940.
84. Savage's parliamentary report to the 1940 Labour Party conference.
85. McIntosh typescript
86. Alf French to Rowland Savage, 24 April 1940. See also another letter by French published in the *Standard*, 30 May 1940.
87. K. Berendsen to author, 19 July 1982; *Listener*, 5 April 1940
88. Notes used during telephone call, in Rowland Savage's hand
89. French to Rowland Savage, 24 April 1940, and McIntosh typescript. For a photo reproduction of the card, see *Standard*, 2 May 1940.
90. The full text of Savage's confidential report is published, *inter alia*, in Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, pp. 198–200, and *Standard*, 2 May 1940.

91. *Dominion*, 27 March 1940, and Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, pp. 178–196, for Lee's summary of the conference
92. Ibid.
93. Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, p. 195
94. Ibid., p. 207
95. Lee, *The John A. Lee Diaries*, 27 March 1940, p. 207, note
96. Ibid., pp. 207–9, and Sir Terence McCombs interview, 6 July 1981
97. See Lee, *Expelled from Labour Party for Telling the Truth* and *I fight for New Zealand*, both Auckland, 1940. See also Olssen, *John A. Lee*, pp. 160–212. All political parties—Labour, National and Lee's DLP—suffered from the war with the memberships in every case being reduced and becoming less active. Labour also suffered from the introduction of conscription and draconian wartime censorship and, although regarded as a fine wartime leader by many people, Fraser never was able to rival the affection in which Savage had been held. For discussion of the effect of Lee's expulsion on the party, see Erik Olssen, 'The Impact of John A. Lee's Expulsion upon the Labour Party', *NZ Journal of History* 12; 1, April 1978, pp. 34–49, and Bruce Taylor, 'The Expulsion of J. A. Lee and the Effects on the Development of the New Zealand Labour Party', unpub. MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1970.
98. Alf French to Rowland Savage, 24 April 1940
99. S. M. Louis for the Mother Superior, Calvary Hospital, to Eileen Brown, 24 July 1959
100. Elizabeth French to Rowland Savage and family, 9 April 1940
101. Paul, *Humanism in Politics*, p. 137. See also *Evening Post*, 27 March 1940.
102. Will of M. J. Savage, 26 Feb. 1930, and Department of Justice to the author, 24 Sept. 1981, re net value of the estate. Each of the three descendants eventually received £463. 6*s*. 5*d*., see Public Trust Office to May Savage, 5 May 1946.
103. Aruba Alfrey interview, 26 Aug. 1980
104. Barnard to Fraser, 7 April 1940, TMS 270/31
105. J. G. O'Brien to D. G. McMillan, 21 Nov. 1941, in possession of Mrs Ethel McMillan
106. Wilson interview with Keith Sinclair, 11 Jan. 1971; McCombs interview, 6 July 1981; Nordmeyer interview, 4 Dec. 1980; Mason interview, Radio NZ Archives, T 701–3; Professor John Roberts discussion, 26 May 1982. A similar opinion was given by the public servants: Sir Carl Berendsen, interview with Sinclair, 8 Jan. 1971, and Sir Bernard Ashwin, interview with Sinclair, 18 Jan. 1971. Roy Holland to P. J. O'Farrell, 16 April 1962, O'FC, ANL 6265, B9 F5
107. Fraser to Alexander Scott, broadcaster and leader of the Bellamy Society, 16 Aug. 1940, ASP, TMS 209/3
108. For descriptions of the funeral, see *NZ Herald*, *Dominion* and *Evening Post*, 1 April 1940, and Radio NZ Archives for full funeral, train and burial coverage, D 3538–61. Of interest is 'Requiem' by C. G. Scrimgeour, March 1941, D 2136. Peter Shaw, 'Savage Memorial', *Metro*, May 1984, pp. 123–5, gives an interesting and detailed history of the memorial.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography is selective, including only items of direct relevance to Savage and to the events touching his life. Many newspapers, articles, pamphlets, books, theses and official publications glanced at or consulted only peripherally during the research have not been recorded here.

PRIMARY SOURCES

INTERVIEWS AND SOUND ARCHIVES

During 1980–83 the author interviewed the following people:

Mrs Aruba Alfrey (née French), 26.8.80
Mr Don Alfrey, 26.8.80
Mr John Banks, 3.3.83, 9.4.84
Mrs Eileen Brown (née Savage), 10, 11 and 12.2.80 and 22.8.81
Mr Peter Butler, 14.10.81
Mrs Molly Carr (née Davis), 23.3.83
Mrs Doris Cofield (née Savage), 10, 11 and 12.2.80
Mrs Jennie Douglas (née Anderton), 4 and 9.2.83
Mr Norman Douglas, 4 and 9.2.83
Mr E.R. Eady, 11.6.82
Mrs Mona Filopponi (née Brown), 22.8.82
Mr C. Lowrie Hunter, 6.8.80
Sir Henry Kelliher, 15 and 31.7.81
Mrs Molly Langstone (née Nolan), 13.9.83
Mr John A. Lee, 19.2.80
Mr Mervyn Lusty, 8.4.81
Mr Ian MacKay, 13.10.81
Sir Terence McCombs, 6.7.81
Mrs Ethel McMillan (née Black), 9.7.81
Sir Gordon Minhinnick, 1.8.81
Sir Arnold Nordmeyer, 4.12.80
Mrs May O'Donoghue (née Savage), 10, 11 and 12.2.80
Professor John Roberts, 26.5.82
Mr Alan Sawbridge, 24.5.83
Rev. Colin Scrimgeour, 15.4.81. Rev. Scrimgeour was also interviewed by the author on 24.9.68

During the latter part of 1960 and early 1961, in the course of researching the early years of the Labour Party, the author interviewed the following people:

Hon. William T. Anderton
Hon. Thomas Bloodworth
Hon. Frank Langstone
Mr John A. Lee
Mr Allan J. MacDonald
Mr Alec Monteith
Hon. H. G. Rex Mason
Sir Walter Nash
Hon. J. Thomas Paul

Professor Keith Sinclair made available tapes of interviews he recorded while researching his biography of Sir Walter Nash:

Sir Bernard Ashwin, 18.1.71
Sir Carl Berendsen, 8.1.71
Hon. Ray Boord, 24.1.72
Hon. Bill Fox, 11.10.72
Mr Harold Innes, 29.3.73
Hon. H. G. Rex Mason, 25.5.70
Sir Arnold Nordmeyer, 26.5.70
Colonel W. N. Pharazyn, 18.1.72
Hon. David Wilson, 11.1.71

Radio New Zealand Sound Archives provided cassettes of the following items:

Cassette 1: H. G. R. Mason on Labour history
C. Scrimgeour on Savage
Cassette 2: 1935 election night
Tribute to Savage by Peter Fraser
C. Scrimgeour 'Requiem' and 'Memorial Service' for Savage
Cassette 3: Tributes to Savage
Announcement of Savage's death
Christmas messages 1935, 1937, 1938
New Year message 1940
Savage speech 1936
Cassette 4: 1938 Election-night speech
1938 Pre-election speech
1936 Christmas message
1937 Opening 2YA
NZ problems, 26.11.39, 3.12.39, 10.12.39 (i)
Cassette 5: NZ problems, 10.12.39 (ii), 17.12.39, 7.1.40, 14.1.40, 11.2.40, 1.3.40
Cassette 6: NZ problems, 28.1.40
Welcome back to Parliament, 6.10.39
Declaration of war 5.9.39
Parliamentary debate on elections, August 1938
Civic farewell before leaving for the coronation, 24.3.37

Two Television New Zealand programmes were also viewed:

Nordy Looks Back, 8, 15 and 22.12.80
John A. Lee, 14.4.84

CORRESPONDENCE

The author received informative letters from:

Mrs Aruba Alfrey (née French), 8.10.80, 15.9.81, and 26.1, 19.2, and 5.8.83
Mrs Judith Bassett, 15.3, 26.5 and 22.7.82
Mr C. E. Beeby, 28.6.82
Mr Keith Berendsen, 19.7.82
Mr Douglas Brass, 4.8.81
Mr Don Brech, 30.9 and 21.10.81, and 23.11.82
Mrs Eileen Brown (née Savage), numerous letters 1980–84
Mr T. R. Clarkson, 7.8.81
Mr Frank Corner, 30.6 and 29.7.82
Mr Barry T. Deas, 7.2 and 30.4.83
Dr Bill Gamage, 8.10 and 3.11.81
Mr R. J. Gilmore, 22.7.81
Mr O. S. Hintz, 1.6.81
Mr Leslie Jillett, 24.8.81
Mr G. R. Laking, 27.7.81
Mr John A. Lee, 24.3 and 6.8.80, and 19.7.81
Sir Gordon Minhinnick, 21.7.81
Mr Tony Marshall, 6.10.81
Mr John S. Reid, 4.8.81
Professor C. Tasman-Jones, 12.10.84
Mr Ormond Wilson, 21.7 and 1.8.81
Mr Ralph Wilson, 23.8.81
Mr J.A. Young, 24.8.81

Among letters passed on to the author by Mrs Eileen Brown (née Savage) were letters from Savage to his nieces in Australia; from Mr and Mrs French to Rowland and Doris Savage; from Bishop Liston to Savage and to Mrs Brown; and from Savage's teacher Mrs Sarah Ann Sullivan (née Brown).

PRIVATE PAPERS

AUSTRALIA

E. J. Brady Papers, National Library of Australia, Canberra, MS. 206. Papers on ALP 1890–1914 *inter alia*.

H. E. Holland Collection, Australian National University Library, Deposit P5. Fifty-four boxes of papers, correspondence, notes, clippings and pamphlets, originally collected by Professor P. J. O'Farrell.

Sir Samuel McCaughey Collection, National Library of Australia, MSS. 2024

Sir Samuel McCaughey Documents including map and title deeds to North Yanco Station, Mitchell State Library of NSW, Sydney, MSS. uncatalogued set 529

Sam Merrifield Collection, La Trobe State Library of Victoria. A very large collection of material on the early Labour and Socialist movements in Victoria including minute books, correspondence, financial and membership records, and pamphlets *inter alia*.

Patrick James O'Farrell Collection, National Library of Australia, MSS. 6265. Includes all Professor O'Farrell's notes collected during his research for his biography of Harry Holland. Many of the originals in the NZLP office in New Zealand have since been destroyed.

Dr E. Robertson, University of Melbourne Archives MS., including information on Benalla in 1879

Lloyd Ross Collection, National Library of Australia, MSS. 3939. Includes documents on establishment of *Tocsin* and copies of the Victorian *Socialist*.

Michael Joseph Savage Collection, Benalla and District Historical Society's Pioneer Museum, Benalla. Some family photos and items.

Harry Scott Bennett Collection, Menzies Library, Australian National University

NEW ZEALAND

Ormond Burton Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library MS. 438. Includes Burton's autobiography and correspondence with John A. Lee.

Jack Callanan Papers on the Labour Party 1919–67, Alexander Turnbull Library.

T. R. Clarkson, 'Reminiscences of Radio. Chapter IX. A Deplorable Affair', unpub. typescript, 1981. Copy in possession of the author.

Joseph Gordon Coates Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library, MS. 1785

Michael Connelly Collection, University of Canterbury Library

Edward Dye Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, MS. 1298

G. M. Fowlds Collection, University of Auckland Library

Peter Fraser Papers, National Archives

Henry Edmund Holland Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library, MS. 831. Nine reels of microfilm from the ANU collection.

E. J. Howard Papers, Hocken Library, Dunedin, MS. 980

Axel Gordon Hultquist Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library, MS. 1871, and University of Auckland Library

Cecil Albert Jeffery Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library, MS. 1014

John A. Lee Collection, Auckland Public Library MS 441. The collection is in two parts, the second addition since Lee's death at present being available only to two designated people.

John A. Lee Letter [1939], Alexander Turnbull Library MS. 270/41. Letter attacking Walter Nash and his financial policies.

W. J. Lyon Papers, University of Auckland Library

Henry Greathead Rex Mason Papers, Alexander Turnbull Library, MS. 1751. Includes correspondence 1913–75 and diaries 1958–73.

P. W. G. McAra Papers, University of Auckland Library, MS. A 139. Contains material on Auckland Socialist Party and SDP 1910–14 including minutes, financial reports, correspondence, membership returns, and circulars.

A. P. McCarthy Papers, Hocken Library, Dunedin, MS. 963. Largely correspondence 1912–16.

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Patrick Charles Webb Collection of papers, photos and press clippings sent to Webb's sister, Mrs May Plant, in Australia. The collection was given to the author for eventual deposit in a library by Mrs A. L. Linklater, Mrs Plant's daughter.

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Birth certificate Michael Savage born at Tatong, 23 March 1872, registered at Benalla, 4 Nov. 1872, Government Statist, Melbourne, Victoria

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In addition the following daily or weekly newspapers were used for the period 1907–40:

Auckland Star
Auckland Weekly News
Maoriland (later *New Zealand*) *Worker* from its first issue in 1910. The *Worker* changed its name to the *Standard* in 1935.
New Zealand Herald
New Zealand Truth

Various Labour-Socialist papers that enjoyed short-lived existences prior to 1916 were also examined, notably:

Commonweal
Commonwealth

Elector
Industrial Unionist
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Social Democrat
Voice of Labour

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Dominion (Wellington)
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